



VALHALLA SAGA

BOOK 02

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Valhalla Saga

(발할라 사가)

by

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Synopsis

A professional gamer dies unexpectedly during an E-Sports tournament and is sent to Valhalla, a heaven reserved for only the greatest of warriors.

The warriors of Valhalla are pitted against a struggle for survival in the face of a common enemy. Fortunately, within each warrior lies the roots to their own saga, a legendary tale of their ascendance to fame and feats of great achievement alike.

Witness the birth of an epic saga as this gamer challenges legends and carves a path toward the ultimate glory.

The story itself revolves around Nordic mythology and incorporates a gaming system alongside magical wizards and mighty warriors.

Acknowledgement

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Episode 28/Chapter 2: Great Attack (2)

The dozens of steel structures did not fall in random fashion.

The ones looking from the ground couldn't tell, but Tae Ho realized it in an instant from his perch far above.

The budding flower-shaped steel structures were separated at intervals consistent with one another, and they fell in a circular formation with Kalliv Castle at its center. Indeed, it seemed like a circle was being drawn to isolate the castle from the city.

Loud explosions sounded in consecution. The fomoires that attempted escape as the situation had worsened were crushed by the steel structures and died on the spot.

The ground split and the sky rang as the steel structures pierced deep into the ground. The runes upon the structures' surfaces started to shine, and they floated up to form a sort of diagram. The hundreds of lights became interconnected and established a single, huge wall of light.

Papapapapak!

A rainbow-like energy barrier surged up to the sky. Its appearance was breathtaking, although it spelled death for the fomoires trapped inside.

The God of War, Odin, had given up chasing the fomoires that fled outside of the barrier, and instead, he planned to completely eradicate the fomoires inside Kalliv Castle.

The fomoires within the castle were successfully trapped by the rainbow wall.

Unfortunately, the humans within close proximity to Kalliv Castle were similarly restrained.

The steel structures shot open one after another. The sight of dozens of steel structures rapidly unfurling in sequence was

overwhelming by itself.

“Valhalla!”

“Odin watches us!”

The flowers made with steel bloomed, and warriors emerged in ranks from within. Most of them were inferior-ranked warriors, but they numbered over two thousand.

Even the lowest ranked warriors had the strength which far surpassed the best warriors of the mortal world. As an inferior-ranked warrior was like gathering ten of the lowest ranked warriors, a might of tens of thousands of warriors had appeared on the battlefield.

“Warriors! Charge!”

Many Valkyries had followed the warriors down in the rain of steel, and they led the warriors into an earth-shaking charge. Among them were Reginleif of Tir’s legion and Gandur of Ullr’s legion.

The warriors roared and sprinted forward. To their allies, they were the warriors of Gods and terrifying angels of death to their enemies.

“The ones that have blue paint on their foreheads are humans! The rest are fomoires!”

Valkyrie Gandur yelled in a loud voice and the inferior-ranked warrior, Rolph, of Ullr’s legion, nodded. The warriors surrounding Gandur kept her words fresh in their minds as they roared to face the enemies before them.

Meanwhile, the fomoires had given up escaping the magical barrier, and they charged towards the warriors in a haze of wrathful vengeance. As the two supercharged forces collided, blood spewed into the air and began slowly seeping through the battlefield.

Elsewhere, Rasgrid pictured the battle in her head from within the small forest. She gazed at the distant rainbow barrier with hazy eyes and knelt down. No. ‘Collapsed’ was a more proper description.

As one may have guessed, the barrier was an incredibly large-scaled great magic. As she had undertaken a key role during the ceremony, she had ended up spending all of her magic power and stamina.

She was drenched in her own sweat, and her breathing had grown increasingly labored. She didn’t even have the strength to move her fingers.

Ingrid and Kaldea, who had shared their strength with Rasgrid, were also in similar states.

Kaldea seemed almost unconscious on the ground, and Ingrid had to use her sword as a staff to prop herself up.

Rasgrid closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. With effort, she raised her head once again and looked at the ones leaving the small forest.

A huge figure shot through the sky, and one especially brave warrior of Valhalla sat atop it.

“Fly properly!”

“Maybe you should wear it!”

“Who told you to lose in Rock-paper-scissors?! I knew I’d win from the start! You. Only. Play. Rock!”

“Bastard! Men should always go with rock!”

Rasgrid pretended to ignore the voices she’d heard. She just blessed them with the little amount of strength she had left.

Bracky, who had transformed into a huge dragon after donning a Dragon Wing Coat, was flying awkwardly above the city, and Harabal glared at the rainbow barrier that were fast approaching.

At the same time, Tae Ho looked down at the battlefield from an even higher vantage point. The dozens of flying-type fompires had begun to show unified movements even in the midst of the chaotic environment. They increased their speed as if they'd seen the end of the barrier.

Inevitably, they would soon reach the place Tae Ho's group was stationed. Tae Ho glanced towards Siri as she chugged another potion. Although she hadn't recovered completely, she was now able to control her body.

"Go, Tae Ho."

Siri spoke tersely, but Tae Ho understood and nodded. He released his arms that were grabbing on her waist and spoke.

"I will entrust Rolo to you, Merlin."

"Do not worry, my King."

Tae Ho transmitted his thoughts to Rolo one final time. Rolo snorted, but his attitude vanished a moment later. Like Adenmaha, who grumbled but still did everything Tae Ho asked, Rolo held a similar disposition.

Tae Ho kicked off Rolo's back and surged into the air. Siri laid down to stabilize her posture and Rolo flapped his wings harder and increased his speed.

Tae Ho looked down once again. He twisted his body and took out the Liberatus prototype.

'Let's go for it.'

Tae Ho answered Cuchulainn's words with a smile and then took out Caladbolg from the Liberatus prototype. Caladbolg was already burning as he'd stored its power for the past fifteen days. Thunder sparked following the blade's release.

Tae Ho entrusted his body to the gravity. No, gravity wasn't enough. Tae Ho kicked off empty space to accelerate further. He

shot down like a meteor and then swung Caladbolg in a wide arc across the swarm of airborne fomoires.

What he'd fired was lightning.

A strong attack which could even destroy a mountain!

Kwagagagagagang!

Thunder exploded. The lightning fired from the flaming Caladbolg was like a net. Hundreds of bolts spread in all directions.

The fomoires didn't even have time to scream, let alone dodge the lightning, and they were swept up by the deadly burst and incinerated to pieces.

The dozens of flying fomoires were annihilated in an instant. Their charcoaled remains fell, returning to the battlefield.

The warriors of Valhalla had clearly seen the scene from the ground. They cheered at the flashy display of thunder and lightning that could brighten even the clearest of days.

"Thor!"

"It's Thor!"

"The God of Thunder is protecting us!"

The warriors of Valhalla cheered and their morale surged, but there were some that felt otherwise. They exclaimed almost in unison.

"I'm telling you that I'm Thor's warrior!"

"I am a warrior of Idun!"

They were voices from the sky that wouldn't reach the ground. Tae Ho turned his eyes to follow the voice and then spotted a large dragon flying strangely like a newborn. He was a dragon absolutely wreathed by muscles and brown scales, and the image gave Tae Ho the feeling of watching a dinosaur.

[Is Really Sloppy at Flying]

[Bracky]

Tae Ho smiled unconsciously. He consecutively jumped through the air to reach Bracky. Unfortunately, since Bracky was already a poorly flying dragon, he had completely lost balance from of the aftershock of having crossed the barrier.

“Uaaaa! Is it time to quibble over that?! Fly properly!”

“I am?!”

Harabal cursed at Bracky while the latter swore and put more effort into his flapping wings, but he was still a mess.

Tae Ho landed on Bracky and activated a saga instead of telling the bewildered Harabal to calm down.

[Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

He shared his senses with Bracky and then Bracky’s flight was quick to stabilize. If it was like this, he may be able to land properly.

Harabal let out a sigh of relief, but Bracky still had his complaints.

“I-I feel weird!”

“It’s the same for me?!”

He didn’t feel so violated when he’d shared senses with Siri or the Valkyries.

“Shut up and land!”

As Bracky let out a vague complaint, he twisted his body downwards. Harabal yelled out once more.

Bracky unfurled his wings after dropping a good distance. Tae Ho led Bracky to land and then looked at the ground. The fomiores that had poured from Kalliv Castle were charging towards the warriors of Valhalla with reckless abandon.

If he landed like this, Bracky’s huge body would crush quite a few

fompires, but it wasn't that efficient a strategy. Instead, Tae Ho took out a summoning rock from Unnir.

“McLaren!”

He yelled and pointed at the ground. Instead of acting bewildered, the rock serpent that appeared in the air grasped the situation in an instant. It was because he had already heard from Adenmaha about the battle that would take place today.

Kwagagang!

The rock serpent dug into the earth and released a small earthquake. The charge of the fompires was naturally disrupted, but the serpent didn't stop. He tunneled beneath the surface underground and threw the grouped fompires into discord.

Tae Ho recalled Adenmaha's words at that scene. He didn't delay and another summoning rock appeared in his hands.

“Adenmaha!”

A white, majestic sea serpent appeared in the air. Recently, she'd seemed to favor the shape of a Goddess, but today was different. She had obviously prepared after McLaren's and Rolo's summonings, and she spewed an ice breath immediately.

‘It's a battle of monsters.’

Cuchulainn spoke with an absent-minded voice. The battle prowess of two serpents being unleashed upon the fompires made one think of a natural disaster.

This still wasn't the end. There was something else that remained.

Bracky had released his transformation as soon as he'd landed. Tae Ho restrained Harabal from trying to kiss the ground and then extended his hand to Bracky.

Bracky understood Tae Ho's meaning and said.

“You are going to wear it?”

Tae Ho shook his head. He activated another saga instead of answering.

[Saga: The Warrior That had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

The fake Heda appeared. She received the Dragon Wing Coat from Bracky with a plastered, bright smile and threw it on without hesitation. In Heda's voice, a shout erupted from her lips.

“Draco!”

A small yet beautiful dragon appeared in her place. Its red scales resembled the color of Heda's hair, and its eyes were also gold like Heda's.

It looked just like a stunning Shinsoo that would appear in legends.

“If the real Heda wore it, she'd totally be much more beautiful, right?”

‘That's the first thing you say?’

Cuchualinn spoke in a ridiculous tone, but he was smiling nevertheless. Tae Ho rode on the fake Heda and then spoke to Bracky.

“I will leave the ground to you.”

“Tear down the sky, Tae Ho.”

The sky was filled with battle-ready fomioires. Rolo, who carried Merlin and Siri, was struggling to fight them alone. He had to go and help him.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Tae Ho and Bracky spoke almost synonymously and then laughed at the absurdity. They both turned to face their respective battlefields.

Bracky and Harabal charged, and Tae Ho shot into the sky.

The battle of Kalliv Castle was only just beginning.

< Episode 28 – Great Attack (2) > End

Episode 28/Chapter 3: Great Attack (3)

The battlefield smelled as one would think.

It was nasty and repugnant, and the air was thick with the scent of copper and fish.

It was the smell of blood, smoke, and death.

The battle was proceeding fiercely. The fomiores that had hidden beneath Kalliv Castle poured out from cracks and crevices like an army of ants.

The ones that could fly flew, and the ones that couldn't charged on foot. Many sprinted towards the rainbow barrier rather than towards the warriors of Valhalla.

Bress the Tyrant's senses were keen. He chose to flee rather than lead the fomiores to face the warriors of Valhalla.

As the fomiores fled to the surface, he decided to go underground. Of course, the fomiores actions were also caused by Bress' skillful manipulation. He needed scapegoats to buy some time as he ran away.

Bress mentally reviewed the recent events as he dashed from his throne towards the subterranean network of tunnels.

This battle wasn't by coincidence.

Valhalla had made all the necessary preparations. They were just like a patient hunter who calmly watched their prey flee after releasing an arrow. The patient hunter always caught their victims.

The rain of steel had fallen down upon Midgard. Such an event hadn't occurred since the Great Barrier was raised. There hadn't been only one or two volleys either. The number was enough to completely surround Kalliv Castle.

Valhalla was undoubtedly aiming for a swift victory, and that

was why he had chosen to flee. As always, staying alive was Bress' top priority.

If he died, everything would end. He had to stay alive so that he could plan for the next opportunity.

However, Bress came to a bitter realization as he continued running.

He probably wasn't going to be able to escape through the ground.

Valhalla had had plenty of time for plenty of preparations. From the look of those war machines, there was a really low probability for their operation to have left a path for Bress to escape.

And his guess was spot on.

The rainbow barrier didn't only spread to the ground but also far below it. Every passage of the maze-like tunnel network was blocked. In addition, many of the tunnels' ceilings had collapsed under the shock generated when the barrier had penetrated through them.

He couldn't escape underground. If the barrier was the only problem, he would have pierced through it, but he couldn't do anything as the passages themselves had been sealed off after crumbling apart.

Cold sweat streamed down his back, but Bress still let out an unconscious laugh.

It was because he'd felt Odin's strong desire to catch Bress.

His disadvantage grew the more time he wasted, for Odin would then also have more time to act against him.

What he needed to do was to escape quickly, and he could only think of one method.

He had to destroy the steel structures that were sustaining the barrier and then break the barrier itself.

Without a second thought, Bress promptly crashed through the ground toward the surface.

The fomoiré commanders were positioned outside of Kalliv Castle, for the most part. If they could attack the steel structures from outside the barrier, his plan would definitely succeed, but it was a pointless decision. Even if they'd returned to the castle upon realizing the danger, they lacked enough much-needed time.

Bress thought of Korga and Mordred. They were the forces he could use, but the two of them were already in the middle of battle.

He knew he'd almost reached the surface, for the putrid scent of battle had started filling his nostrils.

Bress wasn't thinking of creating any sort of heroic battle. He ran toward the direction opposite of where Korga and Mordred were fighting. He was planning to charge as a normal fomoiré without releasing his power as King. He would only release his might for a moment, but it would be enough to destroy the steel structures after passing through the warriors of Valhalla.

He didn't need to disguise himself further, as he'd already thrown his crown aside upon vacating his throne. He, someone once called the most beautiful king of the Tuatha De Danann, was hiding his stunning looks with a straw mat.

He didn't even consider of using the humans in Kalliv Castle as meat shields or hostages. It wasn't because he thought lightly of them.

He was faced against the warriors of Valhalla. It was absurd to think that Odin's battle-mad war machines of warriors would grow weak hearted because of such a strategy. They would slash him through any hostage without a second thought.

Bress finally left the castle. Around him, screams, cries, roars, and cheers had all mixed together to form the cataclysmic orchestra of battle.

Korga was doing battle to the North, and Mordred slew with his sword anyone foolish enough to attack him. If one had to choose a direction, he was also towards the North.

Because of that, Bress chose to head directly South.

The warriors of Valhalla and the fomiores slaughtered each other in waves as Bress charged towards them. He heaved his axe into the warriors of Valhalla that dared to swing their swords at him.

A sword was easily deflected away by Bress before he slung his axe at the chest of the weapon's owner. Bress kicked away the surprised, dying warrior and then narrowed his eyes sharply. He rechecked the location of the steel structure once again.

It wasn't time yet. He needed to approach a bit more to release his power.

There was no way the preparations of the warriors of Valhalla would be simple. The moment they discovered Bress, they would surely activate something.

That was why he had to get closer. He would release his full power when he became certain he could destroy the structure in an instant.

But right then, as he was about to take one more step.

Bress could feel it. He hurriedly looked up at the sky.

A ribbon of bolts were screaming towards him.

[Saga: The Arrow of the Witch Never Misses its Target]

The attack came from above at an extreme distance; however, Bress could still see them.

Idun's warrior was watching him atop a red dragon as a golden-haired witch pulled on the trigger.

The ribbon exploded. It exploded even before Bress could properly react. It wasn't that they were attacking him with the explosion itself. It was a signal.

The atmosphere all across the battlefield changed the following second. The eyes of the surrounding warriors of Valhalla turned to focus on Bress. Not only that, but the Valkyries that were scattered around started to gather with alarming speed.

Idun's warrior....

Bress didn't howl and instead donned a face colder than ice. Bress was that kind of person. Impatient and immature kings could only dream of his level of control.

He no longer looked toward the sky. He even erased the lingering doubt regarding how Idun's warrior had found him for now. Bress glanced at the steel structure and then released his aura in the form of a massive explosion.

The unlucky warriors that had been closest to him were incinerated without mercy.

Blood, flesh, and dust obscured his vision. However, his surrounding had already been memorized by Bress's eyes. This obviously included the steel structure.

Bress the Tyrant took a step and his body grew bigger. It was the result of obtaining the body of Cichol, the preceding King of the Fomoires. He, that had been crossbred with a Tuatha De Danann, had a previous height no different from a human's, but it was different now. His body that had swelled up so suddenly now stood more than three meters tall.

He took another step. Treasure that had rested inside the magic pocket of the Tuatha De Danann were unleashed into his hands. They were treasures of Erin, a gruesome sword and twisted axe.

He swung them without pause and the number of deaths on the battlefield soared.

The sharp whistle of cut wind followed in his wake. The warriors nearest to Bress were bisected in an instant and fell without so much as a scream. The ground was swept up by the aftershock and

also became a mess.

Bress charged across the battlefield toward the other steel structures, but Reginleif blocked his way.

“Mighty Odin!”

Reginleif cried out as she hefted her sword. It was a sword she’d used for the ceremony and was not her normal weapon. Runes bursting with the power of Odin covered the exquisite blade and hilt.

The sword absorbed Reginleif’s magic. The runes emanated a blue light, and Bress couldn’t help but pause momentarily. He’d realized what Odin had prepared against him.

It was hard to send superior-ranked warriors or above to Midgard due to the presence of the Great Barrier. As a result, Odin had planned to weaken Bress’s strength with warriors below the superior rank.

It was to the extent that even intermediate and inferior-ranked warriors could face him. This was in order to reduce the number of casualties while fighting him.

Valkyrie Gandur appeared alongside Reginleif. She was also wielding a sword that had runes carved with Odin’s power.

The number of Valkyries increased to seven in the next instant.

Each bore Odin’s magic power in order to weaken Bress substantially.

But it wasn’t enough. Bress was King of the Fomoires. The reason he’d chosen to escape wasn’t one of weakness. A sword etched with rune magic was a rare sight in Valhalla, but it was naught but wishful thinking to defeat Bress with only that.

Knowing this, the Valkyries had also prepared something else.

Reginleif dripped cold sweat and glanced upwards. Even speaking was difficult under the strain of the magic sword, but she still

called out in earnest.

Beyond the sky, and outside the barrier—

There was someone who responded to Reginleif's call. An earth-shaking thunderclap was heard far off in the distance.

Thor, the God of Thunder.

The strongest God of battle in Asgard.

He also couldn't cross the Great Barrier easily. No, it wasn't only that. The moment Thor descended, a big hole would be torn into the Great Barrier. The entire barrier could lose balance and face destruction.

As a workaround, Thor had chosen to send his strength to a spot prepared in advance. His objective was to add his own power to the magic made by the magical swords and thus weaken Bress even more.

Thor took a deep breath and raised Mjolnir. The pure power of a God was concentrated on top of the hammer made using an Unt.

Thor's eyes scanned the landscape below him. Now that the magic circle was established, he would be able to transmit his strength without destroying the Great Barrier.

Thor swung Mjolnir. An overwhelming thunder fell towards the magic circle drawn by the Valkyries on top of the Great Barrier.

At that moment—

The thunder changed direction without warning. This was done by Thor himself, for he'd seen that the magic circle above the Great Barrier had suddenly started falling apart.

It wasn't that a change had occurred on the ground. The Valkyries were still suppressing Bress. It wasn't Bress...someone aside from him. At that moment Thor could only think of one being.

"Loki."

“...Thor...”

A reply was uttered. Loki revealed himself above the Great Barrier as the magic circle was completely erased.

—

Reginleif could feel her mouth dry up. She sent an earnest look, but no answer came from the heavens above. Thor’s divine power wasn’t being transmitted.

How? Why? Why was he delaying it?

There was certainly no time to think as the situation grew more dire at every passing second. Bress the Tyrant was becoming more accustomed to the magic power which suppressed him.

They didn’t have the leisure to wait anymore. They had to complete the magic circle now.

Reginleif’s mouth moved silently and a new rune formed on the magic sword. It was one of the goddess Freya’s.

As a backup, they could weaken Bress with Odin’s runes and then reinforce the magic with Freya’s runes.

The seven swords shone more fiercely, but at that moment, Bress also swung his sword.

The magic circle was completed. Runes were engraved over Bress’s body, but the blood of the Valkyries still dyed the air red.

Reginleif, who’d had her power sucked out by the magic sword, slumped to the ground and watched on in horror. The body of Erendia, a Valkyrie of Thor’s legion, was crudely sliced in half. The neck of Valkyrie Arund, of Heimdal’s legion, was also cleaved into paste.

Two Valkyries had died, but that was merely the start. Bress was weakened, but he was still overwhelmingly strong. They couldn’t weaken his power as planned using just the power of the Valkyries.

“Arund!”

“Rescue the Valkyries!”

“Mighty Odin!”

The surrounding warriors of Valhalla bellowed and charged towards Bress, bloodlust in their eyes. Reginleif wanted to stop them, but no voice came from her mouth. She was too weak.

Her eyes stung as fresh blood splashed over them once again. Bress massacred the charging warriors of Valhalla mercilessly. In his current state, they couldn't defeat Bress with inferior-ranked warriors.

Some inferior-ranked warriors grabbed Reginleif along with the other remaining Valkyries and ran. Gandur muttered something with the little voice she had.

They had to protect the steel structures. They couldn't let the barrier break down.

Bress didn't get drunk from his massacre. He slashed through the warriors of Valhalla with his sword and axe and then looked at the steel structure. He finished up the warriors assaulting him with fluid motions to then begin reciting a chant.

It was the magic of the fomiores. As he finished the short chant, the middle of Bress's forehead split open and a third eye emerged from the gap. It was the eye of none other than the grand King of fomiores, Balor.

It had an overwhelming power to kill those who entered its vision. The ones capable of carrying a God's power could resist it, but there were only inferior-ranked warriors surrounding him.

Balor's red eye blazed with evil magic, and dozens of inferior-ranked warriors screamed and collapsed. The ungodly eye spent an overwhelming amount of magic power, so much so that Bress himself was only able to unleash it a couple times a day, but he was satisfied with the effects. Bress began approaching the steel structure once more.

“Halt!”

“Stop him!”

Even though dozens of warriors had died helplessly before their eyes, the warriors of Valhalla didn't hesitate. They advanced toward Bress but with more than just inferior-ranked warriors. The scattered intermediate-ranked warriors had started to gather.

Bress took a breath calmly and pondered.

There was a setback in Odin's plans.

He saw as much through the reactions made by the Valkyries. Perhaps, the Magician King may have mysteriously intervened as he often did.

Bress threw the axe he gripped in his right hand towards the warriors of Valhalla and took out another weapon from his magic pocket.

The spear of the God of light, Lugh.

The trophy of the Tuatha De Danann when they defeated Balor, the King of the Evil Eye.

Bress looked at the sky and saw Idun's annoying warrior as expected. He was in the midst of charging towards him on the red dragon.

“Tae Ho!”

Reginleif summoned her strength to shout out as Bress appropriately threw Lugh's spear with all his strength. The God's spear that emanated an overwhelming light sailed towards Tae Ho like a harbinger of death.

Light filled the sky completely and a scream could be heard from Siri. The red dragon that carried them disappeared without a trace and they tumbled forward as Rolo dove to save them.

Bress waited for Lugh's spear to return and took out another trophy.

Unexpectedly, Bracky had charged towards Bress as the latter dealt with Tae Ho.

[Saga: The Son of a God]

[Saga: Thunder Enters His Hammer]

“For Thooor!”

Bracky let loose a valiant roar as swung his hammer. Coincidentally enough, the new weapon Bress had retrieved was also a hammer. Bress swung his hammer towards Bracky’s without hesitation.

Both hammers collided with a tremendous boom. A normal person’s bones would have shattered from the vibration alone. The thunder generated by Bracky clashed against Bress’s magic power, but it soon dissipated.

Bracky’s hammer cracked, but Bress’s was unmarked.

“Bracky!”

As Harabal screamed out, Bress swung his hammer once more.

The mallet crushed down towards Bracky’s head.

< Episode 28 – Great Attack (3) > End

Episode 28/Chapter 4: Great Attack (4)

Bracky was smashed away like a ragdoll. Harabal roared and threw his harpoon as Bracky feebly swung his left arm to reduce the impact of Bress' strike.

The atmosphere of the battlefield had started to change once again.

Precisely speaking, there were notable differences in the movements of each side's forces.

The fomoires spread out instead of rallying beside their king. It seemed they were also aiming for the steel structures.

This was no exception for Korga and the other strong fomoires. About half of them worked to save themselves instead of protecting their king.

Bress wasn't displeased, however, as the warriors of Valhalla also had to spread out to deal with the dispersed fomoires.

Kalliv Castle had been the fomoires' hidden stronghold. Despite the fomoires having spread to several places throughout Midgard, the ones living here still numbered in the thousands.

Meanwhile, the surviving Valkyries provided new orders for the warriors. Those of inferior rank were sent to impede the other fomoires, while the intermediate-ranked warriors rallied to challenge Bress. Very soon, almost every intermediate rank, excluding the ones facing Korga and the other stronger fomoires, had gathered before the King of the Fomoires.

Reginleif was slung over the back of an unknown warrior like a sack of potatoes. She'd been gritting her teeth ever since escaping the reach of Bress.

Her last strategy to seal Bress' power had been a failure. Many warriors and Valkyries had already died by his hand, and she realized now that they'd underestimated his strength.

Although he'd only become the strongest after the true monsters had died during the Great War against Erin, Bress the Tyrant was still abnormally powerful among all living fomoires.

Reginleif craned her neck to stare at the sky again. She hoped in vain for Thor's thunder to resound once more, but her wish was not granted.

They had to claim victory with their current forces.

Reginleif took a breath as she was let down. She drank a potion she had prepared for true emergencies and recovered much of her spent magic power. A moment when she'd need the runes' power on the magic sword would come again. As a Valkyrie, she couldn't keep looking on as her warriors sweated blood.

The seals of the runes in Bress's body were glowing with myriads of different colors. They had to finish him before the seal lost strength, or the result would be disastrous.

The ever-present battle cries of the warriors increased in ferocity, and the intermediate-ranked warriors bellowed as they tore across the ground towards Bress.

—

Siri grabbed Tae Ho mid-air and then landed on the ground. Tae Ho had several deep scratches across his body, and he had lost consciousness despite having been protected by Idun's blessing.

"It's because of Lugh's spear. It was an attack capable of even annihilating the dragon the king was riding on. We should be thankful that he merely lost consciousness."

Merlin spoke poignantly as Siri laid Tae Ho down unto the ground. Isolated skirmishes were happening all around them, so it was to no one's surprise that several fomoires had dashed over with killing intent in their eyes.

"Adenmaha!"

Siri glanced around before yelling. Adenmaha wasn't far away. She'd been running towards Tae Ho ever since they'd crashed.

The rock serpent snaked behind Adenmaha like a stalwart defender. The pair gave off an aura strong enough that the fomiores didn't dare approach, so the one who approached them was obviously different.

Adenmaha didn't waste time after reaching them. She gritted her teeth and checked Tae Ho's situation. Meanwhile, Siri eyes grew wide, and she hurriedly stood to raise her weapon.

Mordred.

He had followed Adenmaha. Merlin let out a howl and released his formidable magic while Siri tried to attack him at close range to prevent him from approaching. She ran facing Mordred and pulled the trigger in consecution.

Adenmaha didn't even glance at Siri and focused entirely on Tae Ho. She quickly recited a chant for recovery magic and at the same time checked Tae Ho's chest. It was to find the piece of golden apple she had heard about from Heda.

[Saga: The Arrow of the Witch Never Misses its Target]

[Saga: The Arrow of the Witch is like a Curse]

Siri's bolts emanated the reddish black aura of a curse as they launched towards Mordred like streaks of mist. Mordred simply laughed and charged at the enchanted bolts. Instead of dodging or blocking them, Mordred just crushed them with his own power.

He looked at Tae Ho and cackled once more. He'd noticed the absence of Caliburn's light, and he felt Camelot's glory could now be his. Such was his logic that'd he made an enemy of Tae Ho. Mordred's mentality had completely fallen apart over the fifteen days since their last meet. Even Clarent, the blade which sustained him, had abandoned him.

Still, so long as his heart beat, he was forever a Knight of the

Round Table. A part of his mind was still analyzing the situation.

Merlin was certainly a great magician. He was a living legend that had established Camelot alongside King Arthur.

But he wasn't a combatant. Rather than a battle magician, he was more of a sage. Opposite to the Knight of the Sun, Gawain, he was someone that grew stronger the deeper the night became and weaker as the moon set and high noon approached.

Finally, he was ruthless, a truth that Mordred knew all too well.

Mordred's body blurred. He moved at a speed that far surpassed Siri's expectations and then closed their distance faster than an eyeblink. He didn't allow to Siri draw her sword before he surrounded her with his domain.

He could then feel Merlin's hesitation, and he laughed and swung his sword. Mordred's attack power had greatly diminished after losing the Treasure Sword, Clarent, but he'd still retained his swordsmanship. Siri tried to block his attacks with her crossbow but it was a futile gesture.

As he danced, Mordred cut Siri's body to a bloody pulp, and dozens of sword strikes were quickly gouged through her flesh.

Elsewhere, there was another battle far above Midgard. Loki, who hovered outside of the Great Barrier, didn't bother turning to look at the ground.

Even for Loki, a magical genius, stopping the mighty Thor was difficult. He wouldn't be able to delay him for long.

But it was important task nevertheless. An event that couldn't be rewritten would happen in that short period of time.

"Loki!"

Thor's voice contained bitter resentment. Loki flashed a smile in response that contained frustration and sadness. He decided to recite a new chant instead of reveal some pathetic expression.

—
Each second was precious.

Each second, the situation changed.

Bracky twitched on the ground. He'd survived even after having been crushed by Bress' attack, and he had his genius-like talent towards battle to thank for it.

Right before Bress' hammer fell, Bracky had focused upon a God's power which lay in his mind. It wasn't done consciously. It was something that had surfaced instinctively.

He had saved his own life. Instead of his head being crushed, his injuries ended at the point of merely feeling pain.

Still, it was exhausting. His entire body felt heavy. He tried to stand, but his eyes had trouble focusing.

'Father.'

Bracky thought of Thor and called his name. No, he may have called out his name out loud.

Thor, the God of Thunder.

Bracky knew. He knew that Thor wasn't his real father.

Even the devout worshippers of Elidi Lake had said as much.

They'd told him that he wasn't the son of Thor. He'd never had any relation with his mother.

Thinking about it, it was an obvious notion.

Bracky was an illegitimate child with a prostitute for a mother.

He'd become certain of it after arriving at Valhalla. A hundred years since the Great War, and Thor had never gone down to Midgard since the formation of the Great Barrier. It was a clear truth that he couldn't deny.

'Right.'

It wasn't even something to tease him over.

He already knew it.

That day, Bracky had ended up crying. He was a big guy, big enough for even Rasgrid to feel intimidated, and he'd bawled his eyes out in despair.

Thor found Bracky that day. No—Rather than that, it was more appropriate to designate their meeting as coincidence. After all, Thor visited his own legion quite often, but he'd never seen such a large man cry with such sorrow.

Thor had heard of Bracky, for Bracky's name as a warrior had already spread far across Midgard. Perhaps, he may have heard his nickname as the son of a God.

Maybe that was why he'd patted Bracky's shoulder and said with a smile.

'You are my son.'

Thor hadn't meant any deep meaning with his words. Thor thought of all the warriors in his legion as his children and as brothers by extension.

It wouldn't have been much different to the warriors of the Skald Knights calling each other brothers.

But Thor's words were enough.

Bracky could smile again.

'Right.'

Bracky was a son of a God.

The son of the God of Thunder.

That was why he couldn't be crumpled up in this place like trash.

He had to stand up and fight.

[Saga: The Son of a God Returns]

It was a saga he could use only once per day.

Bracky's injuries recovered audibly. He stood up and then hefted a nearby sword instead of retrieving his broken hammer.

He took a deep breath. He stood up straight and glared at Bress who was mercilessly massacring the warriors of Valhalla.

‘Father.’

He saw several times what Tae Ho did. That's why he could also do it. He had to.

It was good even if it lasted for a moment. Bracky thought of Thor and then concentrated the power of a God.

[Legend-ranked saga: Son of a God]

For how long would he be able to maintain it? Repercussions? Why would he waste time wondering?.

The blood of a God pumping through his veins, Bracky roared and then rushed at Bress like a divine champion.

—

Siri's vision was dimming. She had lost too much blood, and her state was the result of only having faced Mordred for a moment.

Mordred's swordsmanship was borderline transcendent. She couldn't even block properly, and it took all her energy to remain standing.

She couldn't hear either. Was it because she had lost too much blood, or were her ears ruptured? She couldn't know.

Had Tae Ho recovered? How much had passed? She ought to have surpassed the minimum time by now...right?

Mordred swung his sword again. She felt pain as if she had been badly burned. She'd already surpassed her limits and felt like she'd collapse at any second. His next attack would probably be her last.

Siri didn't even know how she'd endured so long. She had

confronted Mordred after yelling like a beast, but her consciousness was hazy and distant.

She...she had to protect him.

This time, she had to.

She thought of the face of her brother. Her brother who'd dangled from a tree after becoming a lifeless corpse. She saw her sister eaten alive by dogs.

Siri faintly watched Mordred's sword as it approached her neck.

It was probably the last attack that she'd ever see.

It was the end now.

However, Siri didn't close her eyes. She tried to move her body in the seemingly time-frozen world around her.

She had to stay alive. This time, she had to protect him!

'Siri!'

A voice was heard. It was the voice she had only heard once since being born, but she clearly remembered it.

Ullr, the God of Hunting.

The God who Siri served and the God who'd never once betrayed her service.

Ullr was currently watching Siri's fight. Even as he observed the giants on the front lines, he did not neglect his warriors. Siri was an important warrior for him, and thus, this battle was also one of importance.

Siri felt strength from Ullr, but she was inwardly surprised upon hearing his half joking words.

'I won't let Idun take you.'

Siri smiled and then realized—

She had also received classes from Ragnar and learned from Tae

Ho several times now.

Mordred's sword wasn't allowed to touch Siri's neck. She dodged it by the breadth of a hair.

Bewilderment appeared in Mordred's eyes as Siri's consciousness grew clear once more. She followed Ullr's voice and released his godly power from within her.

[Legend-ranked Saga: Wolf Goddess]

Siri's eyes became feral and yellow. She moved and disappeared from his vision the next instant.

—

Tae Ho opened his eyes.

He could see the face of Adenmaha.

“I was worried!”

He wanted to caress the tear-stained cheek of Adenmaha, but he didn't have the leisure to do so. Tae Ho blinked once and then recalled the situation immediately. He'd been hit by a shining spear while charging towards Bress with the fake Heda.

The fake Heda had been utterly annihilated, but it was fine as he'd called her with his saga. The problem was the Dragon Wing Coat.

Tae Ho shook his head. He chewed the piece of golden apple he had in his mouth and after that he grabbed on Adenmaha's hands to stand up and then blinked once more.

He could hear a battle. He felt the strong power of a God near him.

Siri fought against Mordred head on. Blood flew off her body with every movement, but weirdly enough, he still thought she looked exceptionally beautiful. Her golden fur shone like the sun, and a wolf's tail had appeared above her rear.

She moved at an overwhelming speed against Mordred. Just from a casual glance, she was much, much faster than Tae Ho when he activated 'Idun's Warrior'.

Elsewhere, Bracky's cries echoed across the battlefield. Backed by the entire army's force of intermediate-ranked warriors, he faced down Bress with fire in his eyes.

"Go."

Merlin spoke from off to the side. He was busy channeling his magic towards Siri and Mordred. His efforts were partly to thank for Siri's ability to overwhelm Mordred. He increased Siri's physical abilities and hindered Mordred's movements simultaneously.

Tae Ho realized why he had told him to go instead of joining Siri.

Bress was growing stronger with each passing moment. It meant that the seal the Valkyries had set up was weakening. He had to finish him quickly before he regained all of his power.

Tae Ho nodded. As if she wanted to help him, Adenmaha bit her lips, but she decided to let him go.

Tae Ho stroked Adenmaha's head and then turned to look at Bress before inhaling sharply. He inserted his strength towards Caliburn.

[Legend-ranked Saga: King of Camelot]

[Legend-ranked Saga: Idun's Warrior]

His body suffered under the burden of activating two legend-ranked sagas back to back, but he had to do it. Tae Ho rapidly approached Bress' battle ground.

Bress the Tyrant was currently enraged.

His cold visage had reached a new extreme as the battle had grown fiercer, but he couldn't endure it anymore.

The warriors of Valhalla.

The terrible kinsmen that were more worried about how they would die instead of when!

The piles of corpses were growing larger. Dozens of inferior-ranked warriors and more than ten intermediate-ranked warriors had lost their lives in a short time.

Regardless of that, Bress was still tied up by his feet. The warriors of Valhalla ignored the threat of death and assaulted him with reckless abandon. Not one batted an eye when the heads of their comrades got crushed or when their bodies were split in two. They were like moths gathering before a fire.

Bress let out a howl and swung his dagger of the Tuatha De Danann. A blow containing his full strength could absolutely demolish the warriors of Valhalla, but he couldn't use it.

Bracky, radiating the godly power of Thor, was blocking his attacks. It strained his body terribly, but he was still capable of doing it.

The biggest issue of Bress' mobility was undoubtedly Bracky. As he blocked Bress, a few nearby Valkyries had pulled out the magic swords and tried to reseal the binding magic on him.

He had to hurry.

Bress didn't save his strength. He released his full might to burn away the rune magic suppressing him.

Bress's body grew even bigger, and at the same time, the rune magic that was covering his body started to fade.

Only a little bit more. If he endured for a bit more, he would be able to break it down completely. He would be able to sweep up the warriors of Valhalla in an instant and leave this terrible battlefield. The rainbow barrier appeared to have been weakened, perhaps because of the fomiores that were in other places. If he broke one or two more steel structures, then the barrier would undergo a complete collapse.

But right then—

Bress turned his head. He saw the most terrible existence.

“Idun’s warrior!”

It wasn’t only the power of Idun this time. Bress recognized the sword that Tae Ho was holding. He remembered the glory of Camelot that had once blazed brightly.

Just who the hell was this guy? He wasn’t this strong during the battle to possess Scathach. Back then, he was merely a normal intermediate-ranked warrior. Even if he could grow strong through Valhalla’s rune system, it also had a limit.

In addition, for him to have Caliburn, the glory of Camelot!

Kwagang!

Caliburn clashed against the sword of the Tuatha De Danann. As Bress was much bigger than Tae Ho, it looked like the former meant to press the latter down like a nail.

But Tae Ho didn’t get pushed down that easily after activating ‘Idun’s Warrior’. He fended off Bress’ sword rather well.

Bress forced a smile that wasn’t a smile. He hadn’t felt true killing intent in a very long while. He forgot about escaping for the moment and focused on killing the existence in front of him.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Loud explosions were heard in consecution. With each clash of their swords, a visible shockwave swept up their surroundings.

Even Bracky, who had previously been holding Bress back alone, couldn’t endure it anymore. He bounced backwards and disengaged.

The battle quickly reformed around the two combatants. It quickly became a ‘1v1’ duel.

The warriors held their breath and surrounded them. Reginleif

and the Valkyries raised their magical swords again and added more strength to the seals and the intermediate-ranked warriors kept the surrounding fomioires at bay.

‘Endure it. You must endure it.’

Cuchulainn spoke. Bress was really powerful, but he, as a veteran warrior, grasped that Bress’s condition wasn’t normal. It was because he’d forcefully broken down the strong seals so a change occurred inside of him. Cichol’s body, of which Bress was proud of, was starting to show a negative reaction.

The efforts of Bracky and the other warriors of Valhalla weren’t wasteful. They’d driven Bress to a point quickly approaching exhaustion.

Idun’s power was supporting Tae Ho. Every time their swords clashed and his body splintered, Idun’s power restored him.

Bress was becoming stronger every second. He would keep growing stronger until he completely broke down from the strain.

Bress’s body became a bit bigger still, growing to a towering height of almost six meters. Instead of swinging the sword of the Tuatha De Danann, he used his own arm as his weapon. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that it was a piece of flesh with no determined shape as that was the power which the body of Cichol contained.

Tae Ho concentrated and called out Idun’s name several times. He felt Idun’s power becoming stronger every time and sharpened his senses.

[Synchro rate: 47%]

Tae Ho suddenly recalled something back when he’d fought against Mordred.

That day, Tae Ho was beaten in swordsmanship. He couldn’t overcome the peerless swordsmanship of a fallen Knight of the Round Table.

But what about Kalsted?

What if it was Kalsted, the strongest swordsman of the Dark Age, that had fought in his stead?

[Synchro rate: 48%]

Tae Ho was a warrior of Valhalla. He was a warrior of Idun and King of Camelot.

But that wasn't all. Kalsted had always been his root.

The swords clashed again.

Each one of the blows was staggeringly heavy, but he managed to block them nevertheless. Strangely, he felt that he'd soon be capable of enduring even heavier blows.

[Synchro rate: 49%]

The fierce battle stimulated his instincts and a force awoke inside of Tae Ho that not even he had been aware of.

A power that didn't belong to Idun nor Camelot.

The strength of a dragon knight.

The power of the exalted Kalsted.

The swords clashed one more time, but their impact was vastly dissimilar to its predecessors. Caliburn fended off Bress' sword, but Tae Ho didn't stop there. The force caused Bress to stagger backwards.

And at that moment—

Right then—

Tae Ho snarled, and the legendary roar of a dragon rocked the entire battlefield. Bress released his power to fend off the unpleasant, scary aura. He swung upwards with all his strength and Tae Ho was tossed a distance away.

However, Bress the Tyrant wasn't pleased, and Bracky could feel it. Tae Ho hadn't bounced off because of Bress. He had used that

momentum to surge up to the sky.

How so? Why?

Bracky understood it instinctively. Precisely speaking, he remembered a scene from long in the past, and the same happened for Reginleif. Everyone from Black Fortress could remember.

The beautiful trajectory drawn in the sky.

That powerful attack.

Rolo and Tae Ho intersected as if they'd made plans beforehand. Rolo carried Tae Ho and started to fly higher with more strength.

Bress grimaced at Tae Ho's receding figure. He didn't turn towards everyone else but rather increased the size of his already enormous body even further. He opened up the eye of Balor in the middle of his forehead.

[Synchro rate: 50%]

The thing that only a dragon knight who contained a dragon's blood in his veins could do.

Rolo wasn't a normal gryphon anymore. He transformed into a real dragon at Tae Ho's command.

The owner of the flames who had contracted with Kalsted, the Dragon Knight, for the first time. Red Dragon, Shooting Star.

The dragon that appeared amidst the flames arced through the sky. Tae Ho, who rode upon its back, then took out Gae Bolg.

“Heda.”

He called out to her as a smile etched itself unto his face. The red dragon fell down towards the ground as burning lightning.

Balor's evil eye gazed at Tae Ho, and a strong curse of death spread towards him. Tae Ho made no attempt to dodge it. He threw Gae Bolg and transmitted the power of Idun with the sentence of the Milesians. The power of life protected Tae Ho.

Roar of the Dragon – Draconic Ballista.

The red lightning passed through the air to explode just above the ground. The previously overbearing curse of death was pulverized under the colossal force.

Long ago, the one who'd defeated Demon King Balor had been Lugh, the God of Light. His spear had pierced through Balor's evil eye and led the Tuatha De Danann to victory.

Today, history had seemingly repeated itself.

Gae Bolg pierced the evil eye of Balor. It pierced the head of Bress the Tyrant.

Today, a legendary part of Erin's history had been reenacted.

The red dragon kicked the ground and displaced the air as it flew up once again.

Below, Bress' body lay smouldering and unmoving.

< Episode 28 – Great Attack (4) > End

Episode 28/Chapter 5: Great Attack (5)

Gae Bolg became stuck in the ground. The white spear had triumphed over Balor's evil eye, and it seemed to almost be resting within the dirt after accomplishing such a strenuous task.

The red dragon soared upwards.

Upon it, Tae Ho had closed his eyes after taking a deep breath. He welcomed the cold, refreshing wind with a smile.

The dragon's name was Shooting Star, the master of flames.

He was flying with a real dragon.

There was more. As Bress' life force faded, an incredible amount of runes was released into the air, and the sensation of victory overwhelmed his body.

Bress the Tyrant. In his time, he'd been both King of the Fomoirs and King of the Tuatha De Danann. He was Erin's enemy of many years and had been one of the ne'er-do-wells that brought destruction upon Erin.

The sensation Tae Ho felt from Bress' defeat was unlike his victory over the giants. Perhaps it was because of the new responsibilities he'd undertaken as successor to Erin.

The sentence of the Milesians and Erin became clearer in his mind as if rejoicing in Tae Ho's destiny. Tae Ho could feel joy in Cuchulainn's words.

However, Cuchulainn was also a veteran warrior, and he was the first to reemerge from his drunken victory into the battle which still raged around them.

'Not yet. There are still many fomoirs left inside the rainbow barrier.'

It was a big accomplishment to be sure, but strictly speaking, he had only defeated a single fomoir. King or not, just as Cuchulainn

had said, there were thousands of fompires still fighting.

The warriors of Valhalla were fighting desperately against the fompires. It had become a battle of attrition between the fompires that sought to escape through destroying the steel structures and the warriors of Valhalla that dyed the land red as they protected the barrier.

Tae Ho opened his eyes slowly. Honestly speaking, his strength was all but spent. Even 'Idun's Warrior' and 'King of Camelot' had faded.

But there were still things he could do.

[Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

He placed his hand on the scales of the red dragon and several emotions and thoughts were transmitted instantaneously

The master of flames, Shooting Star.

A strong existence with a mighty name even among the numerous red dragons during the Dark Age.

The real Shooting Star was a true monster that was hundreds of meters long.

In comparison, the dragon which Tae Ho rode upon was somewhat lacking. About ten meters in length, but a suitable size for a dragon knight to handle.

The soul also belonged to Rolo. It wasn't actually Shooting Star, the one hailed as King of the Lava Zone.

But it was indeed a real dragon.

It was because Rolo had transformed into Shooting Star through the power of the dragon knight and his pact. Although he was rather small, but could still harness the might of the real, legendary dragon.

So long as he could maintain the transformation, Tae Ho felt it was necessary to educate the fompires on why the master of flames

came to be called Shooting Star.

Rolo twisted and rolled after receiving Tae Ho's order. He had made clear that he would only serve Adenmaha as his noonim, but it seemed he was in a good mood after having transformed into a dragon.

Rolo flipped in the air and then flew towards the direction where the fomoires were gathered. He snarled a meteor of fiery energy and released his draconic fire.

It wasn't a mere stream of fire. The blazing sphere was like a miniature supernova as it exploded upon reaching the ground. The nearby fomoires were defenseless to resist.

Flames billowed into the sky. Rolo flaunted like a majestic beast as he flew through the debris caused by the explosion, and many warriors cheered at the dragon and rider duo while others just stared in awe.

"He's really energetic."

"Yeah."

Reginleif spoke after dropping her magic sword, and Gandur had to agree. Before, he'd often appeared like a tamed horse, but now his visage was that of a wild beast overflowing with energy.

Bracky looked at Tae Ho and sighed from exhaustion. The effects of the legend-ranked saga, 'Son of a God', had disappeared, but the blood of a God still remained in his body. And the overwhelming amount of runes that had poured out of Bress had also helped Bracky recover to a degree.

He could still fight.

Bracky acted immediately after he came to that conclusion.

He dropped his mangled weapon that had been damaged while battling Bress and then extended his hand towards the Valkyries. Among the Valkyries, only Reginleif understood Bracky's request

clearly. She laughed magnanimously and then handed over the sword she was holding.

“May Tir’s blessing accompany you.”

Bracky’s forehead was too high up for her to bless him there, so she gave him a blessing on his chest instead. Bracky smirked and knelt down, and Reginleif gave him another, proper blessing as well.

“I’m going.”

He spoke briefly and then ran towards Siri without hesitation. The knight bastard he had seen before was going all out against Siri. The place that needed Bracky most was probably over there.

“Thoor!”

Bracky roared and drew attention to his presence with a mighty battle cry.

—

“Impressive.”

Loki spoke craftily. He put on a smile mixed with admiration as he moved his hands busily. For mere intermediate-ranked warriors to be able to defeat Bress the Tyrant.... It was entirely possible had he been completely sealed, but the seal had failed because of his own intervention. The efforts of the forces of Valhalla must have been limited with only the seals of the Valkyries.

‘I suppose.... Is it Idun’s warrior this time too?’

Loki smiled bitterly and frowned. He was almost at his limit anyways.

“See you around, brother.”

Loki activated the several magics he had prepared beforehand and melted into the void. Thor’s thunder tore into Loki’s position a second too late, and in the second it took to eradicate the traces of Loki’s magic, the tricky God had already completely vanished

from Thor's sensory perception.

“Loki!”

Thor let out an enraged howl. However no reply came back and another furious rumble of thunder subsequently shook the sky.

—

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, frowned upon his throne in Jotunheim.

He'd evidently sensed the death of Bress the Tyrant.

‘It's unfortunate.’

He thought he would be able to use him a bit longer.

But it was unavoidable. Valhalla's attack this time had been really unexpected. Having deployed Loki as a desperate counter to Thor wasn't something he'd originally planned on doing.

The Magician King rolled his fingers. He ordered the Giant of Earth, Balgad, who was currently marching toward Kalliv Castle, to retreat.

‘Valhalla....’

Valhalla and Midgard.

The Magician King had ran many calculations. Although Bress the Tyrant was now dead, his absence was merely a single strand removed from a massive web of scheming. The big picture wasn't damaged. He could still proceed with his plans.

‘About Garmr's soul fragment....’

The Magician King opened his eyes slowly to stare off towards a distant place within Midgard.

—

The battle of Kalliv Castle came to an end at dusk.

In the end, the fomoiros hadn't been able to cross the barrier, and

however many thousands they'd numbered were all slain by the warriors of Valhalla.

The warriors of Valhalla let out whoops of victory. Many Gods of Asgard were praised, and they enjoyed the victory to their heart's content.

Unfortunately, the losses the warriors of Valhalla had suffered wasn't negligible. Almost a fourth of the inferior-ranked warriors had returned to Valhalla to become steel warriors. There were also still quite a hefty number of injured among the surviving warriors.

But even so, it didn't mean that the light of victory in this battle was lost.

The execution of Bress the Tyrant and his fomiores at Kalliv Castle was akin to having partially avenged the tragedy that had befallen Erin.

Perhaps more importantly, Midgard had become safer. As the warriors of Valhalla existed to protect Asgard and the Nine Realms, none of them could ignore the joy of victory.

The Valkyrie Reginleif retrieved the corpses of the dead warriors and explained the situation to the bewildered humans that had been trapped inside the barrier and had hidden during the battle.

Gandur gathered the bodies of the intermediate-ranked warriors and the Valkyries that lost their lives in the battle against Bress.

Rasgrid, Ingrid, and Kaldea proceeded to make a ceremony so that the ones that lost their lives wouldn't lose sight of the path beyond. They lit a grand bonfire like they had done in the battlefield of Asgard which shone like a beacon across the darkened landscape.

"You should just rest since you're really hurt this time. Don't go drinking or anything because you won. Go to sleep directly. Understood?"

Adenmaha was Tae Ho's buzzkill. It seemed like Rolo really

enjoyed having transformed into a dragon earlier, and his face beamed with self-satisfaction, although McLaren had eyes as if he wanted to return as soon as possible.

“Right, thanks to you too. You should also go to rest.”

Tae Ho stroked Adenmaha’s head and dodged her nagging. Adenmaha inflated her cheeks but didn’t push away Tae Ho’s hand. She just waited until Tae Ho removed his hand and then snorted.

“You really...”

Really what? Adenmaha pouted and then unveiled an anonymous smile before returning to Idun’s residence with Rolo and McLaren.

Tae Ho waved his hand in farewell and then turned towards his surroundings. Some of the humans who’d survived the battle were helping the warriors of Valhalla to clean the gory residue off the battlefield.

‘Take Gae Bolg first.’

Cuchulainn suddenly spoke with an anxious voice. They hadn’t been able to retrieve it after they’d defeated Bress.

“You really think someone took it?”

Gae Bolg was a weapon that couldn’t be pulled out if you weren’t a successor of Erin like Tae Ho, just like it was for Caliburn.

Tae Ho retrieved Gae Bolg from the remains of Bress. He felt like the spear of the God of Light, Lugh, would probably also be near.

‘Fortunately, the magic pocket is also intact. Well, wasn’t it obvious as we were in the middle of the fight?’

Be it warriors of Valhalla or Valkyries, they weren’t ones to grow greedy for material items. They had retrieved the magic sword of the Tuatha De Danann which Bress had dropped and his battle hammer, but the magic pocket was still half buried in the ashes.

Tae Ho picked up the magic pocket. It seemed like it was an item

belonging to the Tuatha De Danann that the sentence of the successor of Erin showed a reaction.

‘Let’s examine it later.’

It wasn’t Cuchulainn’s words, but Tae Ho’s thoughts. Tae Ho stored the magic pocket in Unnir before turning his head. He then saw Bracky and Siri that sat back-to-back with wide grins rivaling each other’s size.

“We took care of the traitor.”

Bracky’s words were spoken slowly, and Siri nodded with an exhausted face. Mordred’s corpse was collapsed behind the two of them.

“...and Merlin?”

“He went to assist the Valkyries. It seems like he wants to help on organizing the battlefield.”

Bracky pointed at Rasgrid, who was proceeding with the ceremony, with his chin.

Merlin’s face was casual as he recited magical chants, but Tae Ho could sense a deep, solemn aura from his back.

“He stood at the corpse’s feet for a very long time, and....”

Bracky closed his mouth, and Siri closed her eyes.

He had merely heard about Merlin’s and Mordred’s relationship through brief stories, but it wasn’t like he’d been completely oblivious to their connection. He could somewhat understand Merlin’s feelings.

“You have done well. It was really absurd today too.”

“You too Bracky.”

“Siri was also outstanding. Did you see how she fought?”

“A little bit. She also had a tail, right?”

Tae Ho looked at Siri for clarification, but she merely blushed

and frowned. She didn't say anything, but looking at how she covered her face with her hands, it seemed like she was quite embarrassed.

Tae Ho forced himself to not remark at her beauty for her sake, but Bracky had other thoughts. He laughed and spoke brazenly.

“You were really beautiful and strong. I will see it at a later time.”

Siri didn't even react at Bracky's thoughtless words, and Tae Ho, who knew well enough how her brain operated, prepared to escape while stepping back.

And a few hours later, when the night was deep.

When the ceremony and the retrieving of the fallen had ended, the warriors then wanted to begin their traditional feast, but there were still stray fomoires lurking about. More importantly, there was a possibility for the fomoires outside the castle and the city to come seeking revenge, so they just drank a cup and then concentrated on resting and guarding.

Tae Ho slept in a big room alongside Bracky, Harabal and Siri. As all of them were really exhausted, they fell in a deep sleep as soon as they laid down.

After an indeterminate amount of time—

Tae Ho opened his eyes naturally. A green plains was spread in front of him instead of the wall of the castle. As expected, a massive apple tree had also appeared before him.

Idun's divine message.

Tae Ho put on a smirk and waited for Idun to appear.

She always appeared abruptly to offer greetings.

But something was off. Idun didn't speak to Tae Ho. She didn't even approach him.

Idun had her back against Tae Ho and was transfixed upon the

apple tree. It seemed as if she was entirely unaware of his presence.

‘Maybe.’

If that were the case, him being there didn’t make any sense at all.

Tae Ho approached Idun slowly and made loud footsteps on purpose. Idun turned to look at him.

She tilted her head a few times instead of revealing the smile Tae Ho had grown to expect and then spoke with an exaggerated voice as if she hadn’t even recognized him.

“Oh, wow. Aren’t you Tae Ho, the warrior of Heda? I am called Idun, the Goddess of Youth. Ah, but where is my warrior that doesn’t only call for me when he needs it but also when it’s really important? Do you know?”

Idun smiled inquisitively as cold sweat dripped down Tae Ho’s neck.

< Episode 28 – Great Attack (5) > End

Episode 28/Chapter 6: Great Attack (6)

How else would he react to such a bizarre situation?

As a pro gamer, Tae Ho's brain churned to analyze his sense of impending danger, but he couldn't think of anything.

He'd been isolated. It was no different to having been surrounded by an enemy.

At a complete loss, Tae Ho cocked his head as Idun suddenly began to laugh.

"I'm joking! It's a joke so don't give me that look."

Idun spoke brightly and shrugged her shoulders.

"But of course, it's true that I feel sad and disappointed to hear you only call Heda's name in decisive moments.... At least she's a Valkyrie of our legion. It would have been really twisted if you'd called for another legion's Valkyrie...so it's fine if it's Heda. Yeah, it's fine."

Was it really fine?

Tae Ho had felt her tone grow formidably cold as she said 'if you'd called for another legion's Valkyrie'.

Tae Ho glanced at Idun and she giggled once more.

"It's the truth. It seems like I took my joke too far. Forgive me. My joke ended up going too far because my warrior is just too lovely."

Idun gathered her shoulders and smirked. It was a slight movement, but he felt her charm in that motion.

"N-no, it's fine."

To be fair, her words about him calling Heda weren't wrong.

Tae Ho and Idun let out synchronous sighs of relief and smiled.

"It doesn't feel right to keep you standing so. Please, take a seat."

As always, I have news to share.”

Idun pointed at the wide boulder. As Tae Ho sat down first, she appeared beside him and took a deep breath before continuing.

“Firstly, I would like to praise you. Your merits are worth many great accomplishments. As you know, Bress the Tyrant was an enemy of our Asgard for many years. I want to express my gratitude as one of the Gods of Asgard.”

“I couldn’t have done it alone.”

Tae Ho thought of the moment of victory he’d shared with his team. He had said similar words each time, but it always felt slightly embarrassing.

Still, he hadn’t made it up. It was the truth.

The reason he’d been able to defeat Bress the Tyrant was really because of everyone else.

The Valkyries had sacrificed their safety in order to weaken Bress, and Bracky and the intermediate-ranked warriors had bought invaluable time. The rainbow barrier had held strong because the inferior-ranked warriors had fought tooth and nail against the fomiores.

If even one of these groups hadn’t given their all, his results surely would’ve left much to be desired.

Idun soundlessly gave a soft smile at Tae Ho’s sincere words. She deeply admired this aspect of him.

“But Idun-nim, can I ask you what happened?”

Although the battle had ended in their favor, if something had gone wrong, then there would be much more damages than right now. One of the decisive keys in their strategy was missing.

The light covering Idun’s face darkened. She answered with a lower tone.

“The traitorous God, Loki, interfered. He blocked Thor’s power

from being transmitted to the Valkyries.”

The traitor of Asgard, Loki.

Tae Ho frowned at her response, and he checked Idun’s face and inquired.

“Uh....are the Magician King, Utgard Loki, and Loki different people?”

He was surprised, but Idun still nodded at his question. Thinking about it, it was obvious for Tae Ho, who’d come from another world, to not know about the Gods of Asgard.

In addition, everyone went out of their way not to mention Loki the betrayer.

He may have heard the name Utgard Loki several times while fighting his underlings, but he had never heard the name Loki by itself.

As they shared the same name, Tae Ho’s confusion was only natural.

Because of that, Idun explained calmly.

“Loki isn’t a true God but actually of the giant race. Odin once disregarded this fact and took him in as a God of Asgard.”

Actually, Loki had acted as Odin’s cheek pocket. In other words, one could say that he’d been Odin’s aide.

“Thor and Loki shared many adventures together and formed a strong friendship. Thor treated Loki as his real brother and he even became his eventual step brother.”

It was a tragic tale, for they now stood as both brothers and enemies. Thor had treated Loki as his kin, and the Gods of Asgard had treated Loki like one of their own as opposed to a giant.

“But no one could do anything about his real personality.... You see, Loki took the side of the giants during the Great War. He joined ranks with the camp of Utgard Loki and became our

enemy.”

The Magician King, ‘Utgard Loki’ and the traitor of Asgard, ‘Loki’.

The two had similar names.

“Tae Ho, you must have already realized this, but Utgard Loki is one of our greatest enemies. Unfortunately enough, Loki’s position isn’t much different.”

Tae Ho nodded. Although their names were similar, just as Idun had said, they were two very different individuals.

He then also understood why the Valkyries often referred to him as the ‘Magician King’ rather than Utgard Loki.

“The traitor Loki is an almost unparalleled magician to the level where his skills are even comparable to the Goddess of Magic, Freya’s. During your battle, he appeared at the decisive moment and prevented Thor from sending his power.”

Loki couldn’t defeat Thor; however, he could certainly tie down the greatest God of Battle in Asgard for a mere moment. Additionally, the relationship between the two Gods was far from simple.

“He may appear before you someday. Be careful. His skill in trickery is absolute as the God of Lies.”

Tae Ho nodded slowly at Idun’s warning.

“Loki’s appearance was certainly unexpected, but it still happened regardless. It was a lesson of carelessness to those of Asgard. Odin weeps for the lives that were lost because of this err.”

The losses were far from inconsequential. Although Tae Ho hadn’t lost anyone close, Bracky had lost Erendia, the Valkyrie of his legion who he’d been good friends with.

It only lasted for a moment, but a heavy silence followed Idun’s somber words.

Idun smiled brightly, trying to change the atmosphere, and then continued speaking.

“I’ve also heard good things. It’s been decided that you shall be promoted to the superior rank.”

Strictly speaking, Tae Ho still hadn’t reached the level of a superior-ranked warrior.

However, Tae Ho’s battle prowess when using ‘Idun’s Warrior’ and ‘King of Camelot’ far surpassed the level of an intermediate-ranked warrior too. His strength had certainly reached the boundary of the superior rank.

Because of that, Valhalla had chosen to uniquely promote Tae Ho to the superior rank.

“It will take some time for it to become official, but you will have more capabilities with such a rank. Do you know what they are?”

Idun asked without hiding her anticipation. Tae Ho drew a good mood while looking at her and answered that he indeed wasn’t yet aware.

Idun giggled and then placed her hand over Tae Ho’s and said.

“Tae Ho, you are now able to become the commander of our legion. The commanders of each legion must be superior-ranked at a minimum, but you will soon become one, right?”

The commander of Idun’s legion.

The warrior who stood closest to Idun.

There were many differences between a normal warrior and a commander, and Idun started to name each one of them excitedly.

But more of that, an inquiry formed in Tae Ho’s head.

The seniors of Idun’s legion whom he couldn’t meet yet.

He was expecting it to an extent, but he became certain as he listened to Idun speak.

Tae Ho asked carefully, and Idun nodded with a dark expression.

“That’s right. My warrior, Tae Ho...you are the only warrior alive in Idun’s legion.”

As it turned out, he didn’t have any seniors at all.

Although the legion’s size hadn’t been large during the Great War, the news still came at a shock.

Tae Ho didn’t push for details. It was because Idun had grown pained after Tae Ho questioned her about his seniors.

“But Tae Ho, it’s not that I’m promoting you to commander because you are the only warrior available. Tae Ho, you are really my beloved warrior. Even if there were others, the result would have remained the same.”

Idun clenched her fists and said vigorously before continuing to speak like a bird as if trying to change the atmosphere once more.

“Thanks to you, Tae Ho, the number of warriors that serve me in Midgard have increased. We will need some time but....new warriors will be entering our legion quite soon.”

It wasn’t an external position in the end. At the present moment, Idun’s legion needed a commander.

“Originally, we will have to do the nomination in Asgard but....Tae Ho, just as you know, it’s not easy for a warrior that possesses the strength of a superior rank to pass freely in Midgard. As your strength has reached the point of a superior-ranked warrior after defeating Bress, we aren’t able to summon you so simply anymore.”

It wasn’t as if all the tasks in Midgard were solved.

Just like it was hard for a new, superior-ranked warrior to be deployed to Midgard, Tae Ho’s existence was all the more important as he was already there.

“The Valkyries will perform the nomination in Midgard. This is

something personal now but....how about summoning Heda then?”

After all, it was weird for an administrator of Idun’s legion not to be present during the nomination of the commander of Idun’s legion.

There was a vague, expectant feeling in Idun’s voice. Tae Ho nodded.

“I will do so.”

Of course, Tae Ho also wanted to meet her.

The reason he hadn’t call out Heda in the battle of Kalliv Castle was because the situation was just that urgent.

In addition, there was no way Heda would be in danger during a nomination, so there wasn’t any reason not to call her.

“I will be watching over you from far away.”

Idun spoke softly and then stood up to place her lips on Tae Ho’s forehead. She didn’t withhold any blessings from her warrior like always.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

Tae Ho closed his eyes.

—

After Tae Ho woke up, he participated earnestly in the reorganization of the battlefield.

The first issue that arose was the dividing of the spoils, but Tae Ho wasn’t greedy.

‘You thought well. This battle wasn’t won by you alone. Ignoring the deaths of your comrades and trying to monopolize it all would only produce strife.’

Tae Ho had already claimed both the spear of the God of Light, Lugh, and Bress’ magic pocket. He had already taken the most

outstanding treasures among the ones Bress had possessed, so if he grew even greedier than this, then only trouble would descend like Cuchulainn said.

There were many treasures of Erin the fomiores had gathered beneath the earth of Kalliv Castle. The Valkyries amassed the spoils and divided it to the warriors fairly according to the merits they have achieved.

Rasgrid didn't talk for long about the Dragon Wing Coat she had lost.

"The Dragon Wing Coat was certainly a precious treasure, but it's more important to me that you are safe."

She spoke as stiff as ever and didn't blame Tae Ho and Bracky. She rather blessed the two people.

"I heard from Ingrid. You are receiving blessings from her every day, right? I will also bless you while we're together."

The frequent blessings were a means to strengthen Tae Ho's saga, 'The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him'.

"I'm jealous. I also want a saga like that."

"Me too."

While Bracky and Harabal grew envious again, Siri shook her head and Rasgrid laughed a sound that was uncharacteristic of her.

The Valkyries had calmed the city of Kalliv Ahim that had lost its ruler so unexpectedly and prepared to return the warriors to Valhalla.

Even though they'd rushed it, it took five days to prepare the huge-scaled ceremony of calling the Bifrost to send back the great army.

After one more day passed and it became the sixth morning—

Reginleif lined up the warriors of Valhalla in front of Kalliv Castle.

The warriors of Valhalla that had died in this battle numbered almost a thousand.

Before making the ceremony to return to Valhalla, Tae Ho's nomination to the superior rank and promotion to the commander of Idun's legion took place.

As the Valkyries and the warriors knew better than anyone else about Tae Ho's performance in this battle, there was no one that opposed to it.

It was obvious for the great warriors to be loved and respected in Valhalla.

As the time to step onto the platform arrived, Tae Ho summoned Heda. Heda appeared in front of him and blinked once, just like when he called out Adenmaha.

"Hello, once again?"

Heda said awkwardly and Tae Ho laughed unconsciously. He felt sorry remembering, but the origin of his strength was always incredible.

"I firstly want to apologize."

Heda apologized about lying to him about his seniors in the legion when they'd first met.

The reason why she lied was simple.

Tae Ho, who had already been uneasy, would have been even more wracked upon being told that he would be entering a legion with no other warriors besides himself.

Tae Ho accepted her apology as there was no reason to not understand her reasoning. What more, it had all been for his sake in the end. In the first place, Tae Ho wasn't even thinking of mentioning to her before she'd brought it up.

"It's good to see that you are all well and nice, but the ceremony will start soon."

Compared to Heda, Adenmaha, who'd been summoned earlier, grumbled from nearby.

Heda giggled and then grabbed on Tae Ho's hand and pulled him to the platform.

Reginleif was acting on Odin's behalf, and she declared the promotion of Tae Ho to the superior rank. The warriors cheered whole-heartedly and Reginleif laughed and blessed Tae Ho on his forehead.

After that came his promotion to the commander of Idun's legion.

Heda made public that Tae Ho had become a commander of Idun's legion just like Reginleif had done so in front of the warriors.

The warriors cheered once again, but the end was a bit different.

"Tae Ho."

Tae Ho knelt down on one knee like when facing a God and Heda looked at her surroundings with an excited expression and inhaled sharply. She approached Tae Ho with red cheeks and ears and motioned for him to stand.

Reginleif and Rasgrid tilted their heads in perplexity, and Siri and Adenmaha muttered, 'She isn't planning to-'.

"May Idun's blessing accompany you."

She rose on her toes and, without warning, placed her lips on Tae Ho's. The kiss wasn't light but was rather quite an ardent one.

Everyone held their breaths, and then the warriors of Valhalla subsequently exploded.

"Uoooah!"

"The warrior that was kissed by a Valkyrie!"

"Idun's warrior!"

“Uaaaaa! This is too much!”

The atmosphere became heated in an instant. Reginleif laughed magnanimously and Gandur giggled.

Heda finished and then regained her breath before whispering to Tae Ho with a flushed face.

“May Heda’s blessing accompany you.”

Tae Ho laughed with joy and proceeded to kiss Heda once more.

< Episode 28 – Great Attack (6) > End

ED note: Finally! 😊

Episode 29/Chapter 1: Idun's commander (1)

The King of Gods, Odin, spent long hours each day sitting beside Mimir's lake.

Because of this, several important matters regarding Asgard and Valhalla were organized on location, although, Odin wasn't one to demand the opinions of others.

He fell deep into thought while sitting there, curled up in between the roots.

Mimir, who'd grown hollow and devoid of emotion after death, had become his only advisor. The three sisters sometimes conversed with Odin, but they didn't exchange opinions. Their conversations only served to pass to Odin the thread of fate they had made.

After the Great War, Asgard underwent many changes.

Odin's disposition also underwent a similar metamorphosis.

He hadn't always been someone who decided upon everything by himself. His verdict had always been final, but he once asked for the opinions of others and consulted with his many advisors on a regular basis.

The Great War had changed him.

Odin now held many more secrets than before.

Excluding Thor and a few other exceptions, the Gods couldn't meet with Odin at all.

Instead, the Gods and Valkyries communicated with him through the crows Hugin and Munin.

Perhaps the changes to Odin's character were calculable.

The Great War had taken many things from Odin.

Odin's wife and most reliable ally, Frigg, had her life stolen amid

the conflict..

Once Odin's advisor and friend, Loki betrayed Asgard and chose to stand alongside the giants.

Frigg wasn't the only God who'd lost their life. Several of Odin's loved and treasured had disappeared from this world.

The sun was setting on Asgard.

Odin admired the beautiful sunset as he rose to leave. After he left Mimir's lake, he traveled to Heimdal's fortress, the bridge between Midgard and Asgard and the origin of the Bifrost.

Heimdal, the chief gatekeeper of Asgard who'd used Gjallarhorn to alert everyone of the Great War, hadn't left his fortress even for a single day.

Its defense was his sacred role and task.

Even Odin, the King of Gods, had to personally visit the fortress to converse with him.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

Heimdal welcomed Odin in the deepest and most secretive room within his fortress. He, whose body seemed as solid and stiff as rock and steel, had the appearance of a living, iron tower.

Odin hit his chest twice in reply to Heimdal's courtesy and then curled up by the corner. Heimdal didn't jest. He just stood at the wall across the room from him and waited for the next visitors to arrive.

"I've arrived."

Thor was next to appear. He hit his chest twice with Heimdal and then sat alongside Odin.

Odin lightly patted on Thor's shoulders twice without speaking and expressed his emotions as a father. Thor answered him with a smile.

The last one to arrive was Freya. She, the Goddess of Beauty and Magic, had obscured her head with a large hood.

She expressed etiquette towards Heimdal as soon as she entered the room but frowned upon seeing Odin curled up in a corner of the room.

“You are a king, so do you really have to sit like that? It’s the same for you, Thor. You should have stopped him, and you Heimdal, you should have prepared some seats.”

“I prepared one for you.”

A smile appeared on the brusque face of Heimdal. There was a comfy, elegant chair prepared in the direction his finger pointed.

Freya put on a hesitant face but then let out a sigh and spoke honestly.

“Thank you, but you do know that I wasn’t telling you to give me a chair, right?”

“Of course.”

Heimdal also found it uncomfortable that the King of Gods chose to remain curled up in a corner of the room.

Freya read the sympathy in Heimdal’s voice and wore a like-minded face as if she too were suffering before taking a seat in her chair. Thor, who watched them from his spot, put on a ‘nice to see you’ smile.

“You are still cute.”

“Thor, you shouldn’t smile like that. Even with that handsome face, you still appear foolish. How nice it would be if you were to show a cool and dignified face like Heimdal.”

Thor laughed once again as Freya grumbled with a sweet voice.

“Thanks for calling me ‘handsome’, and Heimdal, I can tell you’re smirking. Even the great Heimdal is moved by a compliment from Freya, is that it?”

“I won’t deny it.”

Heimdal said shortly and Thor laughed even louder.

Freya shook her head a few times as if they were both lost causes and then took off her hood. Her bright, blue hair that wasn’t unlike the hue of the sky flowed down naturally like a waterfall.

Her pale-white face could only be described as matchlessly beautiful. To speak any words of flattery would not be an overstatement.

The Goddess of Magic and Beauty, Freya.

She, who was hailed as the most divinely beautiful woman in Asgard, was a Goddess of the Vanir race that had had disputed with the Aesir over the right to rule Asgard.

She had come to Asgard as a hostage after having been defeated, but that was now all in the past.

She was an important existence that couldn’t be replaced in Asgard and was the commander of the Valkyries that ruled over Valhalla with Odin.

As Freya’s beauty revealed itself, Thor’s mouth hung slightly open unconsciously. Heimdal’s face didn’t change, but his face and eyes became softly tensed.

“You have that look again. I am going to tell Sif-unnie about this.”

Freya spoke sharply, but everyone could tell she’d been joking.

However to Thor, it seemed like a rather serious threat. He hurriedly averted his eyes and Heimdal let out a short chuckle and spoke.

“You say that, but it seems like you’re enjoying it.”

“Well, there isn’t a women alive that dislikes being told that they are pretty.”

Freya shrugged her shoulders and spoke matter-of-factly, and Thor's mouth dropped open again, although he seemed to have better control than before.

This meeting was a gathering between the strongest Gods of Asgard, but the atmosphere wasn't heavy at all.

Actually, Freya didn't mention that she had purposely brightened the mood. Ever since the Great War's conclusion, she'd worked hard to enliven and revitalize the atmosphere even if she had to act cute.

"Then, let us begin."

Odin said in a low voice and the atmosphere in the room grew neutral.

The first one to speak was Thor.

"The fragments of Garmr's soul aren't being discovered at all. We've finished searching through all of Asgard and Svartalfheim but haven't found anything."

Thor also reported about the movements of the giants that were at the front lines. The giants that were there showed their existences clearly with small and big provocations.

After Thor's brief had concluded, Freya frowned slightly before speaking up.

"There are also no notices from Vanaheim and Alfheim. There's Nidavellir and Niflheim remaining but.....As the places are such, searching is difficult and the probability of discovery is low."

Nidavellir was underground and Niflheim was the land of death. The difficulty of searching couldn't be compared to other realms.

In addition, there were comparatively low traces of the Great War compared to the other places. As Garmr's soul fragment was normally found near the old remnants of the Great War, there was less of a chance to uncover any soul fragments in Nidavellir and

Niflheim.

As Freya concluded, the next one to speak was Heimdal.

“It’s not certain, but we’ve discovered traces of a soul fragment having already been retrieved. If the fomiores or the giants really did find it, then the fourth soul fragment has been claimed in Midgard.”

The number Asgard retrieved and destroyed was five, and in addition, three more had been discovered in Midgard.

Just like Heimdal had said, if the fourth fragment really appeared in Midgard, then there was a high probability for the fifth and sixth ones to also be discovered there.

“It’s a bit weird that they are so concentrated in Midgard, but..... as the Great Barrier was set up after the Great War, it’s not that it’s impossible.”

In addition, Odin and Freya hadn’t been in their right minds when they’d created the Great Barrier.

Odin’s thoughts had weighed heavily on the death of Frigg, Loki’s betrayal, and the deaths of countless other Gods. Freya had also faced hard times because her brother, Freyr, had died.

They had proceeded hurriedly to block the second attack of the giants, so Odin and Freya were absent regarding things that happened after the Great War and right before they set up the barrier.

The battle between the warriors of Valhalla and Bress was an example of their non-intervention.

“I suppose it’s obvious to say that we will have to concentrate more on Midgard.”

Thor turned to look at Odin and said these words.

After the Great Barrier was set, Midgard had held a superficial peace for around a hundred years.

By now, the truth of its hidden turmoil had already been revealed.

For the giants to search in Midgard was a difficult task because of the Great Barrier, but even so, it wasn't wise for the Gods to take their time completing the task.

“Um, but Thor.”

As they discussed their forces having to concentrate on Midgard, Freya looked at Thor and carefully called out to him.

As Thor turned around with an inquisitive expression, Freya smacked her lips a few times and then inspected Thor's face after throwing out a question.

“How was.....Loki?”

Thor and Loki had faced each other during their latest battle.

No, to say ‘faced’ was an understatement. They'd attacked one another.

Freya knew about the relationship between Odin, Thor, and Loki really well.

After all, she also had some friendship with him.

Because of that, there could only be several emotions fixed in her voice.

Thor closed his eyes tightly and then spoke with a heavy tone.

“That guy-No, that bastard is our enemy.”

It was impossible to convince him through a conversation. It was also impossible to return to the past when everything had been better.

Thor stayed silent for a moment and then opened his eyes and continued speaking.

“It's all my fault that our strategy fell apart.”

If he had just expected that Loki would appear.

If he had just pushed him back more fiercely.

Freya hurriedly raised her voice at Thor's self blame.

"It's not your fault but Loki's, and if you are going to speak like that, then it's fair to say I was also caught unprepared for his intervention. It's not only your fault, so don't be that dispirited, yes?"

Freya ended up requesting it to him without being aware of it.

As Thor loosened his expression forcefully, Freya spoke again with a rather bright voice.

"I'm planning to reward all the Valkyries and warriors of Valhalla that had contributed this time. Our budget will suffer greatly, so be ready to work hard Thor, okay?"

"I will."

"Good. That's a good determination. From what I've heard, Idun's warrior's performance was peerless this time around, right?"

Freya changed the subject and looked at Heimdal.

Heimdal nodded and agreed.

"It was an eye-catching performance to say the least. If he wasn't there, our warriors' sacrifices would have been much more numerous."

No. Perhaps they wouldn't have been able to defeat him at all. Bress' power had increased from when he'd attacked Erin. If he had had more time, then he would have completely removed from the seal of the Valkyries.

As Heimdal spoke in an excited voice that didn't suit him, Freya's eyes shone with interest.

"Hee. I want to meet him once. The Valkyrie of our legion also said that she wanted him as he was an outstanding guy. Will that 'kid' hate it if I go to meet him?"

Thor clicked his tongue as Freya referenced Idun instead of her warrior.

“After such a long time, she’s finally got a warrior again, but you are planning to take him? How well disposed of you.....”

“Who said I would be taking him from her? I just said that I was going to meet him.”

But of course, she wasn’t planning on stopping him if Idun’s warrior fell for her and said that he would move over to her legion himself.

As Freya snorted, Heimdal cut in with a low voice.

“It won’t matter as he won’t get taken even if you go to him with such intentions.”

“What are you speaking about?”

Freya became slightly annoyed by his words.

However, Heimdal didn’t elaborate. He didn’t mention the highlights of the most recent nomination.

“Well, I can somewhat guess.”

Thor smirked, and Freya frowned as she felt left out of some exclusive secret.

As the heavy atmosphere recovered to some degree, Odin, who’d been watching silently, spoke again.

“Having dispatched Bress the Tyrant is certainly no minor deed. We will need to provide a suitable reward for Idun’s warrior. Regardless of that....Heimdal, how are the battles against the remaining fomoires going?”

“Although the fomoires are without guidance after losing their king, they are showing up one by one. We are grasping their locations slowly, so we aim to hopefully have them taken care of after the nomination for Idun’s commander ends.”

“Valkyrie Rasgrid will assist on the nomination.”

Freya added hurriedly.

Originally, the Valkyries would command the strategy, but they now had a superior-ranked warrior and a commander in charge of a legion.

It wasn't only Rasgrid, but all the Valkyries that had traveled to Midgard should obviously assist with the nomination.

“Ragnar didn't look at him that way for nothing. It seems like it won't be long until the day arrives when we stand together on the battlefield.”

As Thor spoke in a nice mood, Heimdal also nodded.

At the reaction of those two Gods, Freya, who'd never met or seen Idun's warrior, Tae Ho, pouted as if feeling anxious.

“If you keep speaking like that, I really have to go to meet him. Do I have to dispatch a Valkyrie from my legion?”

Even if that wasn't the case, it seemed like Valkyrie Hildegarde wanted to go to meet him.

As light chatter came and went among the Gods, Odin grasped his connection to Hugin a great distance away.

He had sent Hugin next to Rasgrid this morning, so although there was a time difference due to the barrier, he would be able to watch both Idun's warrior and the others that were in Midgard.

The crow Hugin transmitted its memories to Odin.

Odin then unveiled a bitter smile.

—

“Idun! Heda! Idun! Heda!”

“What are you doing?”

“I'm protecting my family's.....no, the peace in my residence.”

< Episode 29 – Idun’s commander (1) > End

Episode 29/Chapter 2: Idun's commander (2)

“Idun! Heda! Idun! Heda!”

“What are you doing?”

“I’m protecting my family’s.....no, the peace in my residence.”

Tae Ho answered Bracky’s question with a rather serious face.

Obviously enough, Bracky’s face contorted in disbelief as he asked again.

“What bullshit are you talking about?”

Just how was alternately calling the names of a Goddess and a Valkyrie related to protecting the peace in his residence?

Bracky’s doubt was logical and Siri, who was sunbathing nearby, angled her head as if she were equally perplexed.

It was obvious for the two of them not to know of Tae Ho’s domestic plight.

Siri had never met Idun, while Bracky was a man who’d never even visited Idun’s residence.

Tae Ho crossed his arms and thought for a moment.

Was it wise to elaborate to those two?

Frankly, he felt he needed some proper counseling from others at least once.

‘If it’s Bracky and Captain Siri.....’

They were the best comrades in arms that could exist, warriors that had surpassed several obstacles together alongside him. In addition, Bracky was a married man with several wives, and Siri was a woman.

At the very least, they’d know better about women than himself.

‘Although, she’s not just a woman but a Goddess as well.’

Idun always announced her attitude as ‘joking’ and that she wasn’t really so petty that he need worry, but Tae Ho couldn’t help but feel uneasy.

‘It will be fine for the two of them.’

If he insisted, they would keep his secret.

Tae Ho’s determination overcame his sense of precaution, and he motioned for Bracky and Siri to come closer.

“Well, the thing is....”

Tae Ho explained the things that had happened during that short, sweet time. After he’d finished, Bracky was the first to speak, his words filled with admiration.

“So even a Goddess came to visit you. Scary bastard.”

It was a divine message with words, but it was actually a meeting.

Siri also nodded with a really surprised face.

“Anyways, the problem is that...Idun-nim....has become sulky?”

Siri spoke while choosing her words carefully. Tae Ho nodded and Bracky smirked.

“The Goddess of ‘Youth’ indeed. How cute.”

“Bracky, you are being disrespectful.”

Siri stared daggers at Bracky for his casual remark. Bracky showed his palms as if telling her to calm down and then turned towards Tae Ho.

“Anyways, if the problem is as such, isn’t there an easy fix?”

“Oh? It seems like you have thought of something?”

“No, well-You can also call out the name of Idun-nim in decisive moments. Take me for instance; I always pray to Thor.”

It was so whenever he swung his hammer, called out lighting, or

even simply swung his fists.

“I also thought the same. In the first place, I don’t know how many times Idun-nim has su...no, been bothered by it.”

The words of the two warriors were reasonable, as it was a no-brainer for the warriors of Valhalla to praise whichever God they served.

However, Tae Ho awkwardly scratched his head before speaking.

“Eh, what can I say? It comes out unconsciously....? I just accidentally blurt out Heda’s name instead of Idun-nim’s.”

After all, he did get strength from it.

“That’s serious. But still, it’s a good time for you. A good time.”

Bracky clicked his tongue and then laughed again.

“But hey, if you flip-flop calling out Idun-nim’s name and Heda’s name, you’ll still end up calling out Idun-nim’s name first sometimes. Won’t Heda also sulk out?”

He’d call out her name after Idun’s.

Tae Ho flinched at Bracky’s words which seemed to pierce his soul. He ran a quick simulation in his head.

Actually, as a serious thought, Heda, unlike Idun, had no way of knowing who Tae Ho called out first so there was no need to worry. Unfortunately, Tae Ho had already distanced himself from thinking rationally about such a tender subject.

Idun could always tell Heda.

“Uh, um, she won’t right?”

Whatever the case, Heda was still a Valkyrie of Idun.

It would be weird to sulk out because Idun was called out first.

However, Bracky only raised his head triumphantly and spoke with an air of unfathomable wisdom.

“Foolish child, the heart of a woman is something you can’t understand with your head.”

Compassion filled Bracky’s eyes as if he’d suddenly gazed upon some poor, hapless creature.

Tae Ho was overwhelmed by a sudden feeling of uneasiness, and desperately turned to look at the only woman present.

“Ca-Captain Siri?”

“I....I don’t know about that. You should go ask Adenmaha instead.”

Embarrassed, Siri shook her hand and quickly stepped back.

Siri always grew awkward when they talked about the ‘heart of a woman’ or other cheesy things.

“Hahh. Besides, it’s disrespectful. Let’s end it here.”

Siri cleared her throat and put their conversation to an abrupt halt. Bracky smirked as if reveling in something, but Tae Ho could only put on a dumbfounded face.

But it was at that moment-

“What are you talking about that’s so funny?”

Valkyries Reginleif and Rasgrid had walked over.

Kalliv Ahim, a land whose ruler had disappeared, had ended up falling into a state of vacancy.

The Valkyries were now in charge of the political affairs, and they worked hard to lessen the problems Bress’ absence had created by promoting new rulers in his stead.

As the situation was as such, although half of the deployed warriors of Valhalla had already returned home, the Valkyries were still stuck at Kalliv Castle.

“We were just talking about worldly affairs.”

Bracky winked towards Tae Ho as he spoke. It was a sign that he

would keep their secret.

Regrettably, his 'secret' gesture had been far too obvious, and it was no different than proclaiming that there was something hidden between the two of them.

What was fortunate was that the ones who'd appeared were Reginleif and Rasgrid. If Gandur was also present, she would have pressed for the truth until the end.

"It's enough if you were resting well. The reason we came is because we have an order to pass along, warrior Tae Ho."

Tae Ho stood up reflexively at the word 'order'. Siri and Bracky also fixed their postures.

Reginleif put on a satisfied face at the reaction of the three people and glanced at Rasgrid, maintaining a neat figure as she stood before Tae Ho.

"Warrior Tae Ho, Commander of Idun's legion. Effective immediately, you shall become the commander of all forces of Valhalla currently within Midgard."

As she spoke about forces, it was obvious that she meant not only the warriors but the Valkyries as well.

As if proving this, Rasgrid spoke right after that.

"Both I and Valkyrie Reginleif will support you. As of now, you have two directives; the first pertains to dispatching the remaining fomiores, and the second is ensuring the continuation of the search for Garmr's soul fragment. This is a direct order from the King of Gods, Odin, so please fulfill your duties as a glorious, superior-ranked warrior of Valhalla without any setbacks."

Rasgrid ended the explanation while looking at Tae Ho and then hit her chest twice.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

As Tae Ho hit his chest twice and expressed etiquette, Rasgrid let out a short sigh. Reginleif, that was behind her, laughed before speaking.

“Well, there’s no need to be nervous about it. It really isn’t that big of a change. You will only have to command and lead the forces as well as deploy us Valkyries to the appropriate areas.”

“That....does seem like something.”

Bracky remarked, and Tae Ho nodded.

Compared to the times when he had to follow the Valkyries’ orders, it was the difference between heaven and earth.

However, Rasgrid smiled as if telling him not to worry.

“Warrior Tae Ho, Reginleif and I will be assisting you. It won’t be an easy task, but I’ve no doubt of your endurance.”

“I have a question.”

The one that raised his hand and spoke up was Bracky. As Rasgrid asked him what was wrong, he continued with interest.

“Is there something that changes when one becomes a superior-ranked warrior or the commander of a legion? I’m wondering because I’ve never met a superior-ranked warrior aside from Tae Ho.”

Bracky had once seen the old man that commanded Thor’s legion in the welcoming banquet from far away, but that was it. A superior-ranked warrior was still an unfamiliar existence for him.

“For the superior-ranked warriors....Right, if I speak with numbers, it will be easier to understand.”

Reginleif clapped her hands and then raised six fingers.

“The warriors of Valhalla number approximately six hundred thousand. Among them there are merely tens of superior-ranked warriors. Even if you calculate it simply, it’s about one superior-ranked warrior per legion.”

Of course, about half of those six hundred thousand were steel warriors, but still, tens of warriors compared to three hundred thousand was still a low number.

“Superior-ranked warriors are heroes that can take control of an entire battlefield by themselves. Because of that, in battles that superior-ranked warrior are deployed, only us Valkyries will assist them.”

They weren't the leaders anymore. The authority of a superior-ranked warrior superseded that of a Valkyrie's.

“You must already know about the myth-ranked saga of a superior-ranked warrior and if there's a change in normal life.....superior-ranked warriors live in a different place from the intermediate-ranked warriors and below. When they are outside the residence, they are given individual tasks that often entail traveling to other planets or protecting the front lines. Siri, didn't you already go to the front lines once?”

“It was for a really short while, but I have.”

When Tae Ho and Bracky were lowest-ranked warriors, Siri was already an inferior-ranked warrior.

After her promotion to the inferior rank, she'd been dispatched to the front lines with the warriors of her legion, albeit for a short time only.

Reginleif nodded and continued.

“It's not excessive to say that most of the superior-ranked warriors are in the front lines, as the war between the giants is still raging even at this moment.”

In truth, they were in a state of ceasefire, but the Gods of Asgard and the giants had never come to an agreement or signed any formal pact.

Their peace was only temporary. Because of that, Asgard was still dispatching droves of warriors to the front lines in preparation for

the inevitable invasion by the giants.

“Whatever the case, the treatment a superior-ranked warrior receives becomes better. Each legion does this differently, so ask when you return to yours.”

In other words, she’d implied that he’d have to find out for himself.

As Bracky rolled his eyes, Rasgrid began expounding upon another topic.

“The commander of a legion is a warrior that both represents and commands it. A warrior can become a commander starting from the superior rank, and each legion only has a single commander.”

Tae Ho was the only warrior in Idun’s legion, but he’d been an intermediate-ranked warrior until very recently. It went without saying that there hadn’t been any commanders for Idun’s legion until now.

“The commander will administer the legion along with the representing Valkyrie of the legion from training the legion’s warriors to increasing the buildings of welfare by using the legion’s resources. As a result, the quality of a legion changes depending on who becomes the commander.”

‘So if a commander is a division commander, then the representative Valkyrie is the one in charge of a division?’

Just by looking at the work they did in their legions, the Valkyries were no different from administration personnel in many ways.

“A commander is the person closest to the God of a legion. Because of that, they’re granted more audiences with their God.”

Bracky and Siri nodded as Reginleif spoke as if that wasn’t cool, but Tae Ho put on a vague expression.

He already met with Idun quite frequently. Tae Ho probably had

the highest frequency of meetings with his God among all the warriors of Valhalla.

“But warrior Tae Ho, are you training hard on the attributes?”

Tae Ho grew unconsciously nervous at Rasgrid’s question, and Siri also flinched and shrugged her shoulders.

Tae Ho put on a desperate expression and replied.

“I’m doing it everyday.”

So there’s no reason to take classes.

Tae Ho forced out the last syllables and sent an earnest gaze, and Rasgrid laughed in a low voice and nodded.

“Right. If it’s you, I can trust in your abilities. I hope you can keep progressing.”

“Thank you.”

Tae Ho thanked her sincerely. Siri, who stood behind him, didn’t make a sound, but her expression was identical to Tae Ho’s. She let out a sigh of relief as soon as Rasgrid finished speaking.

Reginleif laughed again.

“Anyways, we have finished with our immediate task. It seems that we’ll head out to deal with the remaining fomoiros in a few days at most, so you should enjoy your free time. It’s every warrior’s duty to rest when they can, so I hope you can enjoy this time earnestly, okay?”

“I understand.”

Tae Ho had become a commander that would lead the forces deployed in Midgard, but he was still more accustomed to receiving orders.

Rasgrid put on a smile at Tae Ho’s unavoidable answer as Reginleif laughed magnanimously beside her.

Elsewhere, at the same time—

Merlin, who'd been searching for Mordred's room for the past few days, finally found it.

Deep underground, it was closer to a prison cell than someone's living quarters.

Merlin scanned the cold, dark room hewn from rock with a contrite expression before sitting on the dusty, rotting bed.

"Mordred...."

Drawings which littered the floor, ceiling, and wall entered Merlin's aged vision. Within them was depicted the untarnished splendor of Camelot that he couldn't even forget in his dreams.

Merlin couldn't forgive Mordred. His rationale for betraying King Arthur to protect Camelot was completely insane.

Still, despite everything, Merlin's heart bled upon realizing the magnitude of Mordred's love and grief for Camelot.

Merlin checked each drawing slowly before pausing on one.

It was the only drawing that wasn't of Camelot.

"Is that it?"

It was a place that couldn't possibly exist now that Erin was gone.

Regardless of that, Merlin couldn't completely deny the notion.

When Tae Ho had recreated Camelot's glory with Caliburn, Merlin could feel its existence in a far away place.

It was the promised resting place of the king.

It was the land of the fairies, a place which had the highest possibility of containing the sword of the fairies, Excalibur.

"It's Avalon."

Merlin let out a low exclamation and then extended his hand to envelope the drawing itself. He delved into the remnants of Mordred's magic power which remained in the drawing.

—
Time flowed.

The warriors of Valhalla that currently resided in Kalliv Castle were preparing themselves for a new battle.

The fomiores that had lost their king were appearing everywhere, and the underlings of the Giant of Earth, Balgad, moved stealthily amidst the fuss.

On the sixth night since the battle of Kalliv Castle, Tae Ho made plans to go to battle with Rasgrid and went to sleep late.

A few hours later—

Tae Ho opened his eyes again before dawn, but he was quick to realize from experience that he was still dreaming.

‘Did Idun-nim call me?’

Normally when this happened, he’d be granted an audience with Idun.

Tae Ho stood up from his bed and waited for Idun to visit him, but it was different. Rather, it was the same. His surroundings didn’t change no matter how long he waited. A wide plains with an apple tree had yet to appear.

But that wasn’t the only weird thing.

A sweet scent was coming from somewhere, different from the smell of apples.

Tae Ho sniffed a few times and then pinched his cheek once to see if it hurt or not before rising from his bed. The sweet smell was coming from outside his door.

Tae Ho slowly opened the door and was greeted by a completely different scene than the hall of Kalliv Castle.

It was a really big bed.

There were several layers of carpets on the ground, and

beautiful, thick tapestries were draped along the walls. It gave a rather cozy feeling.

Tae Ho scanned his surroundings slowly. There were cats rolling on the cushions splayed over the ground. If he'd counted their numbers, it wouldn't be surprising for there to be dozens of cats.

It wasn't a divine message from Idun.

The sweet scent and the odd feeling weren't hers.

Tae Ho took a wary step forwards and then the inner side of the bedroom entered his vision. To his surprise, a bewitchingly beautiful lady lay lounging on the enormous bed.

Tae Ho halted his movement, but he was already in front of the bed. The woman wore a thin, sky-blue dress that flashed her skin and a fluffy hood which covered her head. He couldn't see her face, but he knew she was an outstanding beauty just from her figure alone.

“So....you are the rumored commander of Idun.”

The woman spoke enigmatically and then twisted her body forward a bit to fixate upon Tae Ho. She then took off her hood, and long hair and a beautiful, alabaster face were revealed underneath.

The Goddess of Beauty and Magic, Freya.

Her beauty seemed to depict the golden ratio. Even Gods fell for her beauty if they met her in person, so there was nothing more to say about the warriors of Valhalla.

Freya had never requested any warrior to move to her legion, but there were nevertheless countless warriors that had done so.

Obviously, all of those who'd flocked to her legion voluntarily did so because they craved her love.

Freya wasn't particularly thinking of stealing away Idun's commander. She was curious, but if Heimdal hadn't provoked her,

then this wouldn't have happened in the first place.

Freya looked at Tae Ho with her mystical, azure eyes.

It was the seductive eyes of Freya that had caught the hearts of innumerable men.

But when Tae Ho faced them, a thought arose in his mind which Freya couldn't have foreseen in the slightest.

‘Heda is prettier.’

Is what he thought of unconsciously.

The clout of love was rather mighty.

< Episode 29 – Idun's commander (2) > End

Episode 29/Chapter 3: Idun's commander (3)

Freya was stunned.

Her shock came from the fact that there was no change in Tae Ho's face even though she'd approached him directly.

No, there was a change.

His look was one you'd wear after seeing something beautiful.

Tae Ho's expression revealed as much. The face of someone who just spotted a beautiful person.

But it was a bit different. Should she relate it to an expression one held when viewing something beautiful in nature? It was obvious that Tae Ho hadn't fallen head over heels for Freya.

Freya suppressed her bewilderment and focused on making her gaze even more coquettish. Again, Tae Ho faced her eyes, but he still didn't fall over her beauty like a slobbering idiot.

'Ah. Isn't he impotent?'

Or he likes men.

However, Freya discarded that thought as her beauty didn't only affect men but also women.

She was certain that the reason Idun's warrior could be so calm in her presence was because he was thinking of another woman.

Freya laughed inwardly and then put on her usual, bright expression instead of a seductive one and spoke.

"Commander of Idun. I'm called Freya."

"Idun's warrior greets the Goddess of Magic and Beauty."

Tae Ho had been educated about the Gods of Asgard by the Valkyries, Bracky, Siri, and others. As he called out the fields of Freya's divinity, she put on a satisfied smile.

But it was then-

“Freya!”

A shrill voice pierced through the air. A corner of the cozy room cracked to reveal plains behind it. The next second, the whole wall broke down to unveil a very familiar apple tree.

Two opposing domains became mixed in one spot; however, the plains couldn't completely overtake the bedroom. Freya, who'd sat up on her bed, let out a sigh before speaking to the Goddess standing there.

“Hi. It's been a while.”

“Just what are you doing?”

A really indignant voice.

Although her face was obscured by the light shrouding her, one could clearly feel the anger radiating off her.

Tae Ho was a bit frightened at her unfamiliar visage, but Freya merely waved her hands as if she'd expected it.

“Calm down, calm down. As the chief of the Valkyries, I just came here to compliment the warrior that had performed many great merits. I wasn't planning on taking him or anything.”

Her words were as if addressing a kindly junior of hers.

Idun didn't respond and only glared at Freya. The latter just shrugged.

“Well, it doesn't even look like he's interested in swapping legions. It really hurts my pride, you know.”

Of course, if Freya grew determined and went all out, the story may have changed, but as she had said, it wasn't her intention.

It appeared that Idun had grown even more agitated at Freya's words, as she walked to stand firmly between Tae Ho and the bewitching goddess. Her aura was like a cat's whose hair had bristled.

Freya continued to smile as she slowly crawled toward the end of her bed to look at Idun and Tae Ho.

“Idun’s warrior, as your Goddess is so brusque, I’ll get straight to the point.”

Idun still didn’t say anything. As Tae Ho nodded behind her, Freya crossed her legs to show her sensual curves before continuing.

“You should already know, but I’m the chief of the Valkyries. I aid Odin, the King of Gods, in ruling over Valhalla.”

The one at the apex of Valhalla’s command was obviously Odin, but his next direct subordinate wasn’t Thor, but Freya.

Among other things, the rune growth system which was every warrior of Valhalla’s roots was created by her.

Although she’d collaborated heavily with Odin, no one could dispute the notion that she was the true creator of Valhalla.

“Idun’s commander, the achievements you’ve earned this time aren’t small. You must have already received praise from the Valkyries, but I came to this place because I wanted to compliment you directly. A great warrior deserves treatment suitable to their accomplishments.”

Freya’s beauty changed based on the situation, just like a fairy pilt.

At this moment, Freya’s beauty emanated a stark nobility and air of high standing.

After Frigg, Odin’s wife and Asgard’s landlady, died, Freya assumed her role as administrator of Asgard.

As a result, she was accustomed to the role of a queen and gave off a profound dignity alongside her usual brightness.

Freya stopped talking for a moment and flicked her eyes between Idun and Tae Ho. At that, anger appeared in Idun’s eyes for a

moment, but she expertly regained her composure.

Freya laughed.

“Idun’s commander, while I was thinking of what reward to bestow you with, I heard something fun. After hearing, I knew exactly what to prepare. Apparently, you’re called the ‘Valkyrie Master’ by the warriors of Valhalla?”

Tae Ho was at a complete loss for words and couldn’t speak.

It may have been his imagination, but he felt a bit of resentment from Idun’s back.

Whatever the case, Freya laughed gracefully as if finding Tae Ho’s reaction amusing and then crossed her legs the other way.

“Extend your hands. I will bestow upon you something suitable for a Valkyrie master.”

At Freya’s words, Tae Ho extended his two hands and light seemed to condense in the air. A white, flawless horn appeared within them.

“It’s a Valkyrie Horn, something like the sibling of Gjallarhorn which Heimdal possesses. When you blow it once, the Valkyries nearby will gather at your side. This horn holds my decree as Valkyrie chief, so all those who gather will follow your orders without question.”

Originally, a superior-ranked warrior held higher authority than a Valkyrie, but that didn’t mean they could order them around.

Of course, if a superior rank became a commander of a legion, they could obviously give orders to the legion’s Valkyries, but it wasn’t that they could do the same to the Valkyries in other legions.

There were many cases of Valkyries following and respecting the orders of a legion’s commander, but strictly speaking, there weren’t obligated to follow the orders of a commander from

another legion.

What Freya gave was an object that granted him the right to gather and order any Valkyries on a whim.

It was a reward that only the real Valkyrie master could grant.

“Thank you.”

Tae Ho suppressed his happiness and thanked her politely.

As Freya nodded lightly, Idun, who’d been staring, spoke up casually.

“Freya, you’re finished with your business, right?”

Her voice was still on guard even if it was less than before.

“Don’t rush me too much. After all, you’re in front of none other than your warrior.”

Idun’s mouth clamped shut at her words. Such was the integrity of honor between Gods. Regardless of how she’d meant her words, they were still true.

Actually, Tae Ho was really surprised about Idun’s behavior. Her actions, expressions, and words were quite different from her usual self.

“You really are being favored.”

“I’m always thankful.”

As Tae Ho gave a suitable answer immediately, Freya laughed and nodded. She turned towards Idun once more.

“Come closer. I will give you a blessing before the divine message ends.”

She was speaking to Tae Ho, but her eyes were directed at Idun. Tae Ho also turned to look at Idun.

Idun pressed her lips inside the light at the eyes of the two people and then stood to the side and opened a path.

Freya smiled cutely at her silent permission before switching her gaze to Tae Ho. He gulped dryly and then stood in front of Freya and lowered his posture.

“Raise your head.”

Tae Ho raised his head as Freya approached him. She arched her back to bless him on the forehead.

Suddenly, Freya turned to look at Idun with a malicious smile. She then blessed Tae Ho’s lips instead of his forehead.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

The time their lips touched was merely an instant; however, it was a really vivid and memorable one.

Tae Ho opened his eyes widely in surprise, and Idun exploded in anger.

“Freya-unnie!”

“Let’s meet another time.”

Freya laughed and then waved her hand. Both Freya and the bedroom disappeared like a lie and the plains swept over the entire surrounding area.

It was a perfect hit and run.

After a few seconds had passed—

Tae Ho wasn’t happy even though he’d just been kissed by the Goddess of Beauty. No, he rather felt that he was faced with misfortune.

“Uh..um....”

As Tae Ho struggled awkwardly, Idun took a deep breath and then spoke as if nothing had happened.

“Hmhm, my warrior Tae Ho. It’s good to see that you are healthy.”

She acted as usual but also felt incredibly uneasy.

“Um, me too.”

Tae Ho just made it worse. All of a sudden, Idun swooped down in front of Tae Ho and spoke urgently.

“Why are you like that? Did she use a strange magic on you? Is that it?”

Freya was the Goddess of Magic. Whatever Idun’s thoughts were, several warriors of various legions had indeed migrated to Freya’s while vying desperately for her love.

The light obscuring Idun’s face revealed traces of shock, worry, rage, and fear all at once.

Tae Ho peered at the light and then opened his mouth gradually.

“No, um.....”

“Um?”

“I was just wondering why you’re always hiding behind the light.”

It went without saying that their awkwardness was a result of the recent situation, but Tae Ho also hadn’t made his question up.

When he first faced Idun, he thought that all the Gods were like this.

But Thor was different. He could clearly see his face.

It wasn’t that weird until now since Tae Ho only had two references.

But after seeing Freya, he became certain that there was something strange. While Freya seemed to glow from her charm, there wasn’t any bright light on her like Idun.

Like Thor, she’d been clearly visible.

Idun flinched at Tae Ho’s words and then answered with a low voice.

“If....If you want to see what’s beyond the light, I can show it to

you.”

Idun didn't particularly wait for Tae Ho's answer. As she finished speaking, she raised her right hand and touched her face. The light covering her face subsequently disappeared.

Beautiful, blond hair that seemed woven from countless strands of gold was revealed atop her translucent face.

However, he could only see half of her face. Across the rest, Idun wore an encompassing, black mask that contrasted her fair features.

Of course, it wasn't that the mask covered her entire face, so he could still see her expression clearly. Her sharp chin and pretty lips were also clear.

“Hm, it seems like you are somewhat disappointed.”

As Idun spoke with a sulky voice, Tae Ho flinched and shook his head hurriedly. To be frank, he'd merely been baffled to see a mask appear under the light. Regardless of what he saw, Idun had still listened to his request. It wasn't something he should be disappointed about.

Idun covered her mouth with her hand and laughed.

“I'm joking. Joking.”

Although she was wearing a mask, it was much easier to read her emotions and expressions than when she was hidden behind the light.

‘But what did she hide herself for in the first place?’

He couldn't imagine any reason for it.

In addition, by looking at Idun's movements, it didn't seem like a normal mask. It was like a veil or a pair of sunglasses that the wearer could use to look from the inside.

While Tae Ho was pondering it, Idun looked up at the sky and pouted.

“My warrior, Tae Ho, it’s unfortunate, but I will have to return today.”

Of course, she hadn’t originally planned to send a divine message at all.

Tae Ho nodded and then lowered his posture like he did with Freya. Idun thought for a moment after seeing Tae Ho kneel, but she ended up blessing him on his forehead like always.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

Idun revealed a gentle smile and Tae Ho answered in kind. He then blinked and woke from his dream.

—

The number of warriors that’d remained behind in Valhalla to eradicate the remaining fomiores were exactly a hundred. This included Tae Ho’s group.

The number decided upon after guessing that it wasn’t a good influence for existences of Asgard to roam Midgard for longer than necessary.

Ingrid stayed back in Kalliv Castle with a few warriors.

It was to dissuade some neighboring countries from invading the now leaderless Kalliv Ahim.

It wasn’t that acceptable for the existences of Asgard to provoke to politics in Midgard, but it was only to prevent Kalliv Ahim from suffering any further damage.

It was a really irresponsible thing to step back saying that human affairs should be handled among themselves.

Tae Ho split up some forces with Rasgrid as she had the most leadership experience out of the Valkyries who’d remained behind.

It was also to exterminate the few fomiores that were left effectively.

And a month later—

As the mopping up of the fompires was ending, a change occurred.

The smoke coming from the fragments of Garmr's soul that Ingrid had stored away started to blow in a specific direction.

Valhalla showed an immediate reaction, as this phenomenon had already happened in the first expedition in Midgard.

Tae Ho and Rasgrid received a heavenly order and paused the cleanup of the remaining fompires to make haste towards another location.

They rushed to where Ingrid and the soul fragments were at.

—

The Giant of Earth, Balgad, didn't personally witness the battle that occurred in Kalliv Castle, but he knew what happened.

The Giant of the Night, Avalt, thought of the Giant of Strength, Harad, at the last moments of Bress the Tyrant's life.

Idun's warrior.

The one that had slain the Giant of Strength was Thor; however, Avalt remembered what Harad was trying to do before he died. He tried to kill the high-named Ragnar Lodbrok and the warrior of Idun that wasn't even at the intermediate rank.

It was then that he'd thought that Idun's warrior may very well become a great enemy for the Magician King one day.

The day of Bress' death, Avalt was able to confirm his belief.

Idun's warrior was dangerous. There was a dire need to sever the roots before the flower bloomed entirely.

The Giant of the Night, Avalt, opened his eyes in the darkness. At that moment, there was a voice that called out to him like an illusion.

The Giant of Earth, Balgad.

It was him.

—

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, sat upon his throne and looked off to a distant place. He rolled his fingers across his armrest and sent out two streams of his magic carrying orders.

One was sent to the front lines and the other to Midgard.

The magician king took a deep breath. He felt like the old wound in his shoulder by the Prince of Light, Cuchulainn, was itching.

A hundred years since the Great War.

Soon,, the time to stand on the battlefield would come again.

—

The Gods on par with Thor couldn't enter through the Great Barrier. The possibility of their immense power influencing the barrier was too high.

Loki was certainly a strong existence; however, he was the God of Lies and could portray his level of strength however he wished.

Loki was now inside the Great Barrier. He, who stood in a place cast in shadow, was glaring at the sky like a statue. Far above, a flock of crows were traveling through the air.

Odin.

Loki took his eyes off the flock. He analyzed the message of the Magician King that had grown faint after having passed through several territories.

“Let everything happen as the King wishes.”

Loki mumbled in a low voice before moving with vigor.

The biggest country of humans in Midgard, Ironside, was now his target.

< Episode 29 – Idun’s commander (3) > End

Episode 30/Chapter 1: The knights of the round table (1)

Including the now destroyed Erin, there were now ten planets in this universe.

Each of these realms used the name of a world that exists.

Just like Asgard, Erin and Olympus.

The realms weren't the same with each other. They had similar parts but each of them had their unique colors.

Asgard's biggest difference with the other realms was the existence of the world tree Yggdrasil.

Asgard was divided in several sectors and all those sectors were in touch with the roots or branches of Yggdrasil.

Asgard, the land of Gods and the place that is at the highest point of Yggdrasil.

The huge land of humans, that is covering Asgard.

Alfheim, the land of fairies, and Svartalfheim.

The beautiful land where the Vanir reside.

The home for the dwarves and the underground kingdom where the sun doesn't rise, Nidavellir.

Asgard's other world that is filled with frost, Niflheim.

Those weren't the only sectors that the world tree touched. One of the roots of Yggdrasil touched with the land of the giants, Jotunheim.

This composition was widely spread in Asgard and also in Midgard. Because of that, the humans in Midgard land and rocks that were above the big roots and branches to be their world.

It was a funny idea but the truth was a bit different.

The world tree Yggdrasil was a really huge tree but it was still smaller than Midgard. No, it was certainly smaller than even Alfheim and Svartalfheim.

The world tree was just a concept.

The white and huge tree was piercing the center of Asgard and several people called it as the world tree Yggdrasil, but this was only half true. That tree was merely a substantiation of a part of Yggdrasil.

It was more proper to look at it as Yggdrasil connecting the several sectors into one.

The several lands were connected by one thanks to the system called Yggdrasil.

That was the shape of Asgard, one of the ten realms.

&

“Valkyrie Ingrid greets the commander of Idun.”

Ingrid faced Tae Ho at the entrance of the castle of Kalliv and then hit her chest twice.

After Tae Ho got promoted to the commander of Idun’s legion, Ingrid always used polite words at formal places.

You wouldn’t know in personal places but she had said that she couldn’t treat a commander of an army impolitely in a formal place.

‘She’s as earnest as always.’

There were many times that Rasgrid and Reginleif talked politely to Tae Ho but they weren’t comparable to Ingrid.

Actually, it wasn’t only the Valkyries that changed their way of speech with Tae Ho.

“Don’t call me captain Siri from now on.”

Siri had said these words about a month ago, when they were

going out to clean up the remaining fompires.

“Tae Ho, I know why you keep calling me as captain but you are now a commander. I don’t know in private places but honestly speaking it’s burdensome for you to call me captain when there are many people. It also won’t be good to you.”

For Tae Ho ‘captain Siri’ wasn’t a title but a nickname filled with affection. As Siri had faced countless trials with Tae Ho when he was merely a lowest ranked warrior, Siri was something beyond a simple comrade.

Because of that, Tae Ho came up with another nickname as soon as ‘captain Siri’ got denied.

“Then what about Siri noona?”

It was close to impossible to guess the age of the warriors of Valhalla with just their appearances, but taking into account the time they have been in Valhalla, there was no doubt that Siri was older than him.

Siri flinched at Tae Ho’s proposal and then said quickly while shaking her head.

“Ju, just call me Siri. Just like Harabal and Bracky does. Please.”

It was burdensome for Tae Ho to call her as noona but it would become a bigger problem if Bracky or Harabal imitated him.

In addition, Siri still had some rejection towards people calling her noona.

Tae Ho simply listened to Siri’s request as she had said that she was afraid about Harabal and Bracky imitating him.

Tae Ho thought of what happened with Siri and then glanced back. He could see Reginleif, Siri, Merlin, and Helga that were in the same troop in the subjugation of the fompires so they had been with him all along.

Siri tilted her head as if asking what was wrong and then Tae Ho

noded once and faced Ingrid. Listening to the story, it seemed like Rasgrid's group had also arrived.

As they didn't have the time to waste or leisure, Tae Ho moved to the conference room where Rasgrid's group was waiting at.

"For Asgard and the nine realms."

"For Asgard and the nine realms."

Tae Ho saluted with Rasgrid while hitting his chest twice and then greeted Harabal, Bracky and Gandur with his eyes and started the conference.

There was a map of Midgard spread in the big and square table that was in the middle of the conference room.

Ingrid placed a red rock on top of Kalliv castle that was in the center of Kalliv Ahim and started to explain.

"Garmr's soul fragment has started to react two days ago and its pointing a certain direction just like it did in the island of king Sven or in Katren."

They sent the soul fragments they discovered in the island and Kataron to Valhalla, but the fragments they retrieved in Radetza was still being held by Ingrid.

"The direction it's pointing at is as following."

Ingrid placed a long and firm wooden ruler on the table this time. The fragment of Garmr's soul would be in the direction the wooden ruler was pointing at.

"There are no special regions in the path?"

"There are a few."

Ingrid answered briefly at Rasgrid's question and then placed yellow rocks on the path the wooden ruler crossed.

"They are named forests, villages and cities that exist in the path."

Until now, Garmr's soul fragment had always created a change. Because of that, if there were people living in the area near the fragments, then the rumors would spread much faster.

"There are particularly no rumors regarding the changes. Perhaps the soul fragments may be located on the places that the yellow rocks aren't placed at."

As there have already been several precedents, they could somewhat guess the distance with the amount of smoke the fragment emanated. Although the margin of error was quite big, they could lower the margin if more conditions were added.

Ingrid pointed at the place in between the two yellow rocks that were the farthest from each other.

"Currently, this place has the highest probabilities."

Bracky frowned at Ingrid's words. It was because the place Ingrid's long and slender fingers pointed at was one of the famous and harsh mountain ranges in Midgard, the Karton mountain ranges.

"It's vague."

Rasgrid opened her eyes sharply. She raised her head to look up at Tae Ho and he nodded.

"The direction where the remaining fomoiros were headed to is overlapping."

The remnants Tae Ho and Rasgrid chased were all heading towards the mountain ranges of Karton. Their objective may be beyond the mountain ranges but it was too much of a coincidence.

Then, Merlin that was silent until now, approached the table and said.

"If it's the mountain ranges of Karton, there's a place that comes to my head."

Merlin picked a red rock and then placed it in the middle of the

mountain ranges.

“There’s a gate that connects to Erin in this place.”

“A gate? Are you talking about a space door?”

Merlin nodded at Rasgrid’s question.

“It’s similar. An old gate that was built long before Erin got destroyed.....and even before Camelot was set up. Erin and Asgard hadn’t been interacting with each other a few days ago.”

It was an item that the Tuatha De Danann and the fomoires disputed over with before the Milesians appeared in Erin.

“Does it still work?”

Merlin frowned as if going through his memories at Tae Ho’s question.

“It was actually half destroyed when I passed over there long ago to check on it. In addition, even if it does work, Erin has already been destroyed. There’s a possibility that the exit gate in Erin or even the place itself got destroyed. We also can’t ignore the influence of the great barrier.”

Two or more space doors had to exist in order for it to work properly. It was because the entrance and exit gates had to do their roles.

“But if it does work and there’s even a destination place, it means that it’s the escape route for the fomoires.”

Bracky frowned and said. If it were the fomoires, they may only think of hiding and live like rats, but the ones that had some strength would choose to evade the warriors of Valhalla and escape from Midgard.

“So the fragment just appeared in that place?”

If it was coincidence, then it was a trick of fate.

Harabal shrugged his shoulders and said.

“If we interpret it in a good way, it is a good opportunity. We will be able to catch two or three birds with one stone.”

The fomiores had lost their pivot with the death of Bress.

The reason Valhalla put that much effort to get rid of Bress wasn't simply to chase away the fomiores from Midgard. It was to stop the giants from entering Midgard through the fomiores.

Now that the powerful fomiores along with Bress had died, the force of the fomiores was greatly weakened. Because of that, it would be hard for the giants to send strong giants to Midgard like in Radetza or Kataron.

The fomiores got weakened and so that would hinder the movement of the giants.

While all this happened, Garmr's soul fragment had appeared.

Looking at it with a different point of view, it was the opportunity to take care of two things at once.

Everyone turned to look at Tae Ho and he came to a fast conclusion instead of delaying.

“Let's depart immediately.”

To the mountain ranges of Katon.

The warriors of Valhalla left the castle of Kalliv.

&

At the same time on a different place.

Heda was tying up the wooden boat in the dock while Tae Ho's group was increasing their speed.

“Lalalala lalalalalla.”

After she finished setting things up, she sat on the wooden box just like the first day she faced Tae Ho. As she looked at a far place, she could see ships of other legions entering the dock.

The Valkyries of the other legions that were standing on the

decks saluted Heda. Heda waved her hand lightly or greeted her with a glance of her eyes and then checked her bag she had brought with her. It seemed like she was planning to write a letter to Tae Ho while she waited.

But it was when she just spread the paper and wrote a word of ‘Hi’.

A shadow was cast over Heda’s head. Heda turned to look up reflexively as her piece of paper got dark and then faced some big warriors standing in front of her.

She was looking at them for the first time but it was different for the warriors. They had expressions as if they were meeting a famous person, as if they had heard several things about Heda.

Heda blinked for now. She looked at her surroundings and then pointed at herself with the pen she was holding.

“Huh? Maybe?”

Maybe.

“Idun’s Valkyrie.”

“The most beautiful Valkyrie.”

The warriors smirked and Heda flushed. It was partly because she was embarrassed but also because she was excited of pure happiness.

How long had passed since Tae Ho entered?

New warriors had entered Idun’s legion.

< Episode 30 – The knights of the round table (1) > End

Episode 30/Chapter 2: The knights of the round table (2)

Heda closed and opened her eyes once.

It didn't change. There wasn't only one or two big warriors in front of her, there were five of them.

Tae Ho didn't know, but actually Valhalla didn't take in warriors every day. At least once in a few days or at most once in a day.

As a warrior's soul entered the souls resting room at the entrance of Valhalla, it fell asleep until it's turn so that it wouldn't notice the passage of time.

Whatever the case, the important thing was that they gathered the warriors and received them at once.

It was different for popular legions like Odin's or Thor's legion and it depended on the situation in Midgard, but there were times that they received hundreds of warriors at once.

Because of that, five warriors wasn't that big of a number. You could say that it was rather low.

But everything depended on who you were talking about.

Five was a big number for Idun's legion as it reached a record of 500%!

In addition, the time they gathered warriors this time was short. As Heda looked at her surroundings she noticed that the number of warriors that entered the other legions only amounted to ten.

Five people

Ohh five people!

It was different to when Tae Ho entered. She could be calm with Tae Ho as it was the first time someone entered Idun's legion since the Great War and was a really unexpected thing.

But this time, she was somewhat looking for it and the results were more than she had thought of, so her mouth dropped open unconsciously.

If she had a tail, she would be waving it really quickly. Heda forced down her urge to jump everywhere and said calmly.

“Wait a moment I will check your names.”

Heda opened the pocket that was hanging on her waist and then spread the list as if it was something she usually did.

‘There are, there are!’

The names of five warriors were really listed on it.

“Um, right. Yeah. But I will still check your names just in case. Answer me if I call out your name.”

Heda called out the name of each of them and every time, the warriors answered with a loud voice.

But it was when Heda finished naming the five of them.

“The most beautiful Valkyrie.”

“The prettiest Valkyrie in Valhalla.”

“The Valkyrie that is prettier than even a Goddess!”

The warriors called out to Heda with their own methods.

Heda cleared her throat at the embarrassing but nice to hear nicknames and then asked after flushing.

“Um....what? Do you have anything you want to ask? Ah, I’m Heda. Called me that way.”

For her to be the prettiest Valkyrie in Valhalla. Was Tae Ho the one that spread the rumors? And just what was the Valkyrie that is prettier than even a Goddess? Tae Ho wouldn’t have been able to meet that many Goddesses. Or was he talking about Freya, the Goddess of beauty and magic?

‘Tae Ho, you too.’

He is so childish.

It was when Heda was twisting her body and thinking about Tae Ho.

One of the warriors that looked at each other raised his hand and asked.

“Valkyrie Heda. Where’s the ship of our legion?”

“Huh?”

As Heda asked back unconsciously, another warrior asked while his eyes shone.

“Idun’s warrior said that we had a really big and cool ship.”

“Right, right. It was a luxurious ship that was adorned in gold.”

“It was a cool ship that could carry hundreds of people. It could even fly on the sky.”

It seemed like they were talking about the flying pirate ship.

But that wasn’t the important thing. The important thing was that the warriors were looking at her with eyes filled with expectation. In addition, one of them looked at the wooden boat that was behind her and Heda felt like she could listen to his thoughts.

That wooden boat shouldn’t be it, right?

Ey, no way.

Idun’s legion wasn’t a place that kids played war at.

“Uh.....so.....”

Heda felt cold sweat dripping from her back. Tae Ho could come up boldly as nothing, but the situation was different this time. There were too many things the warriors had heard before entering the legion compared to Tae Ho that didn’t know anything.

‘Tae Ho!’

Just know he was the subject of affection but now he was the subject of resentment. How could he lie like that and how would he take care of it?

“Will you wait for a moment?”

She had to first put off the urgent fire. Even if she came up confidently as Tae Ho-no, as boldly as him, the wooden boat in front of her was too small to carry all five warriors. She couldn't make repeated trips while leaving the warriors standing on the dock so she had to come up with something.

Heda hurriedly drew a rune in the air and threw a white feather to the air. And then, the white feather transformed into a beautiful owl and started to fly towards the residence of Idun.

“Just a moment, a moment.”

The simple warriors didn't doubt that Heda's reaction was suspicious but rather let out sighs of exclamation while checking their surroundings. As she heard the stories in between, it seemed like their expectation towards the residence was great.

‘What do I do?’

That tens of Valkyries prepared delicious and luxurious meals everyday. Just what kind of residence was he talking about?!

Heda pressed her mouth shut to hide her anxiousness and then looked at the direction the owl flew at. A reaction returned when the ships of the other legions started to leave one by one.

“Heda, what's wrong?”

Adenmaha, that appeared as a sea serpent, transformed back into the shape of a Goddess and landed on the dock. The warriors clapped, enjoying the flashy transformation.

Heda said.

“They are new warriors that entered the legion. I forgot about the number of warriors and brought a small ship. That's why I

would appreciate it if you could help.”

Compared to Heda’s leisurely words, she sent an earnest gaze and Adenmaha that was fast to catch on things just nodded slowly instead of breaking the atmosphere by saying things like ‘only a small boat? Our legion only has that boat.’

“Well.....it’s unavoidable.”

‘Thank you! I really appreciate it!’

Heda moved her mouth and sent a gaze filled with thankfulness and Adenmaha snorted like always and then jumped back into the water and transformed into a sea serpent.

“Two will get on the boat with me and the remaining three will ride on Adenmaha.”

“Ohh!”

“Ohhhhhh!”

The greatly moved warriors discussed about who would ride on Adenmaha, but the one that had the final decision was none other than her. Adenmaha picked three warriors that seemed to be the lightest and the ones that weren’t picked put on depressed faces and got on the wooden boat.

“Hmhm. Does someone want to smoke?”

Heda departed from the dock and then asked after taking out the cigarette. Compared to Tae Ho, all of them wanted to smoke it but there was only one cigarette.

Heda told them to smoke it in turns and then gave it to the warrior closest to her. Heda could hide that she had coughed out the smoke because the warriors were fighting on who would smoke it first.

Heda fixed her posture to sit more comfortably and then looked at the warriors smoking the cigarette with a satisfied expression but then worry filled their faces.

“What’s wrong? Are you hurt? Or is it cold?”

As Adenmaha asked the warrior that was riding on her, the handsome warrior that had a long beard shook his head.

“That’s not it. I’m just moved. One of the reasons is because I entered Valhalla but the main reason is because I also became a warrior that rides on Valkyries, right?”

So he was trembling because he was happy.

The warriors that were sitting behind the bearded warrior cheered.

“Ohh! Warriors that rides on Valkyries!”

“Me too!”

“Do you want to get beaten? Do you still want to spout nonsense? I will turn over.”

The last one was Adenmaha and the warrior that received the gaze of a sea serpent directly could only shut their mouths and shrink down.

it was poor to see the dispirited warriors but Heda ended up laughing unconsciously. The warriors that were riding on the boat asked that Heda.

“I heard that Idun’s legion possesses the best food in Valhalla and that it’s not from this world. Is that true?”

“As it’s food from Valhalla, it’s already not from this world right?”

“No, I also heard that it’s the most delicious in Valhalla.”

“Right, right. I also heard that.”

The warriors talked among themselves and brought out topics to speak about.

“I also heard that there are beauties that are comparable to Valkyries.”

“Is that the only thing? Ragnar Lodbrok. I also heard that the king of the vikings is residing in Idun’s residence.”

“Ohh Ragnar! Ragnar Lodbrok!”

“There are also strong and cool Shinsoos.”

The warriors put on shining expressions again. The warrior that was closest to Heda asked her with shining eyes.

“I’m really expecting going towards the residence.”

“Yeah.”

Heda clenched her fists unconsciously and drew a smile.

&

“Heda told me that you will pay for it.”

The day after the warriors arrived at the residence.

Adenmaha got summoned by Tae Ho and clicked her tongue.

“You should have held yourself in the exaggeration, how could you make up things?”

Adenmaha got summoned to a small cabin inside the flying pirate ship. It was carrying all hundred warriors of Valhalla but it had still surpassed the limit even though the ship had increased to its maximum size.

Because of that Adenmaha’s shoulder was touching with Tae Ho’s. Tae Ho shook his hands and said: “Ey, when did I make up things? There’s you and Heda in the residence. And also captain Siri and Scathach-nim.”

The part that Idun’s residence was a place that beauties stayed at in Valhalla wasn’t made up. Although he did exaggerate the numbers a bit.

“Hmhm.”

Adenmaha snorted like a always as if she was happy that she got named. Tae Ho snickered and continued speaking.

“In addition, master Ragnar really is there.”

If it were the strong and cool Shinsoos he had Adenmaha, McLaren, Rolo and his wives.

“What about the food?”

“If it’s the food Heda made, then it’s the most delicious in the whole world. You also eat it everyday so why don’t you know? Ah, I want to eat food made by Heda.”

“Ah, yes. How infalible.”

Adenmaha said with lukewarm eyes and Tae Ho relaxed his body a bit.

“So new warriors really entered our legion.”

It was the result of some months of publicizing.

He thought that it wasn’t completely proper to be happy as you had to die first to enter Valhalla, but whatever the case it was true that he was happy.

“They said they were warriors that died against the battle with the fomiores. They all fought valiantly because they believed that they could go to Valhalla.”

“Mm.”

Listening to it, it seemed like they were the warriors that had died in the recent battle against the fomiores.

‘So this was what master Ragnar spoke about?’

The warriors of Midgard knew that Valhalla existed. Because of that they thought that it was more important how they died rather than when and they didn’t fear death in the battlefield.

But it all had its limits.

If all men wished for a brave death in the battlefield, the world could only become a mess.

The warriors were more specialized in destroying rather than

creating. Just who would work the field and make buildings if everyone wanted to become warriors?

If young men threw their lives like nothing, then the heritage of the families would only get cut off.

A world with endless wars was just like hell.

And Odin didn't wish for a world like that.

Because Midgard wasn't a human farm to replenish warriors of Valhalla.

It was a precious world where countless lives grew up.

Ingrid had said that it wasn't good for the warriors of Valhalla to stay in the mortal world for a long time.

It was obvious. The more the humans of Midgard saw the activities of the warriors of Valhalla, they would value the life after death to be more important than their current lives.

Rasgrid hadn't made the warriors stay in the shrine for nothing. Having sent back most of the warriors to Valhalla right after the battle with the fomiores ended was for same reason.

'When the cleanup of the fomiores and the searching of Garmr's soul fragments ends, Valhalla will distance itself with Midgard. We will stop deploying warriors for at least tens of years....or perhaps for dozens of years. The best thing is for the existence of the warriors of Valhalla to stay as legends inside of myths. We are too close to them right now.'

Tae Ho remembered Ragnar's words and nodded. Even Tae Ho, that didn't belong to Midgard, found the current situation to not be normal.

"Ah, and I have something to discuss with you."

Adenmaha, that was looking at Tae Ho thinking by himself, flicked her shoulder and then said.

"The number of warriors will keep increasing from now on

so.....Heda asked me if I wasn't thinking of becoming a Valkyrie."

"You can become one?"

Because Adenmaha was a Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann.

However she just shrugged as if it was nothing.

"Well, it's not that I can't. And if you look at it with another point of view, it's rather similar."

Valkyries had a low stature but they were still Goddesses. Looking at it from Adenmaha's point of view, that was just a normal Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann, her rank didn't increase or get lower, it was just moving to a side.

"What do you think, master? Would you like it if I became a Valkyrie?"

"I will always welcome it."

Actually in Tae Ho's situation, nothing would change in his life if she became a Valkyrie of Idun but he would gain quite a bit from it if he looked at her battle prowess.

He could strengthen her with the 'warrior that rides on Valkyries' and also register her with the 'warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him'.

"Hmm. I will think about it then."

"Right, I will be waiting for the day I receive a blessing from you."

"Hmph."

Adenmaha's mood became good at Tae Ho's words and then stood up from her place.

"I will be going now."

"Right, tell Heda how I'm doing."

Adenmaha frowned because he kept calling out Heda until the end and then disappeared while snorting.

Tae Ho got left alone in the cabin and started to think.

‘Wait a moment. We will reach the mountain ranges of Katon in two days, and new warriors entered today.....’

At least tonight, or tomorrow at night.

Tae Ho fell asleep early and then could face the one he had expected.

“My warrior Tae Ho! There are a lot of things I want to talk to you about!”

The Goddess of youth Idun.

She was more youthful than usual today.

< Episode 30 – The knights of the round table (2) > End

Episode 30/Chapter 3: The knights of the round table (3)

“That’s what I’m saying. I met the five of them today. They were all good kids.”

Idun started speaking with a really excited face while sitting next to Tae Ho on the wide boulder. He could only see her lips because of the eye cover that was more like a mask but Idun could make quite a lot of expressions with just her pink lips.

Tae Ho felt like he was looking at a bird that was chirping so he started to concentrate more on Idun rather than her story.

“But still Tae Ho, you went too far. Heda was really troubled because the expectations of the warriors were too big.”

She could somewhat evade the answer when they were going to the residence but when they arrived they only found Heda as a Valkyrie. Excluding Tae Ho, the only warrior that stayed in the residence, the five could not avoid noticing that they were the only ones there.

Tae Ho answered boldly at Idun’s voice.

“Ey, weren’t their expectations fulfilled? They were greeted by Heda and even met Idun-nim. I didn’t lie up to that point. I was a bit subjective.”

And a little excessive?

“You do speak well.”

Idun giggled. She tilted her head and looked up at Tae Ho for a moment and then asked with a friendly voice.

“My warrior Tae Ho, did you listen about picking a new Valkyrie from Adenmaha?”

“Yes, I heard that Heda proposed it to her.”

If the commander was someone that commanded the warriors of a legion, then the representative Valkyrie of a legion led the Valkyries in a certain legion.

The need of a new Valkyrie wasn't that noticeable as Tae Ho was the only warrior, but Heda was in charge of selecting new Valkyries and training them as she was the representative of Idun's legion.

"New warriors will increase so we will also need new Valkyries. All of these things haven't happened in a long while, so it's quite enjoyable."

He could feel just how happy she was with her lips, voice and even her small movements.

Tae Ho looked at that Idun and felt that it was regrettable. Because the more warriors entered, the time he would be able to face Idun also got shorter. Perhaps, it may also be true for Heda.

Was this the feeling you got when you get new siblings?

As Tae Ho smiled bitterly, Idun placed her hand on top of Tae Ho's and said.

"You are special Tae Ho. How will you be the same as them?"

Idun was looking at him as if she already knew what he was thinking about. Tae Ho got happy but also bewildered.

"Can you show that much favoritism?"

"I can. Why wouldn't I be able to?"

Idun answered rather shamelessly and smiled brightly. No matter how many warriors entered the legion, the one Idun would favor the most would still be Tae Ho.

"Now that I see, Heda was asking. A Valkyrie more beautiful than a Goddess. Just who were you talking about?"

Tae Ho couldn't see her eyes because it was being covered by the eye bandage but he felt like she would be putting really sharp and

expecting eyes.

Tae Ho answered immediately.

“Of course it’s Freya.”

Idun seemed to be really happy that Tae Ho said Heda was more beautiful than Freya, perhaps because she had had a little confrontation with her.

Idun snorted for a moment as if she was imitating Adenmaha and then looked up at Tae Ho and asked like a surprise.

“Then Tae Ho, what if you compare Heda and me? I’m also a Goddess.”

Tae Ho couldn’t answer immediately. As Idun saw his hesitation on his face, she put away the hands that were on top of Tae Ho’s and pouted.

“So that’s the case. Tae Ho was certainly a warrior of Heda. That was the case.”

Rather than imitating Heda, it seemed to be her own words.

As Tae Ho started to drip cold sweat, Idun giggled like always and then shook her head.

“I’m joking, a joke.”

Until what part and up to where was a joke?

“Good times always pass by the fastest.”

Idun took a deep breath and then stood up. She placed her hands on Tae Ho’s shoulders and said gently.

“My warrior Tae Ho, I will be waiting for the day you return to the residence safely.”

Tae Ho closed his eyes after getting up and Idun placed her lips on Tae Ho’s forehead.

“Let my blessing accompany you.”

A warm golden light wrapped up Tae Ho.

&

The biggest advantage with the flying ship was that you could ignore the terrain and fly, but being able to operate it day and night was also a strong point you couldn't exclude.

Excluding Rasgrid, who was tired from operating the ship all night, all the other Valkyries and intermediate ranked warriors were gathered at Tae Ho's room. As the cabins were small in the first place and there were too many members, everyone's shoulders were touching each other.

"The reaction of the soul fragment is becoming stronger. It seems like it really is the mountain ranges of Katon."

Ingrid said with her usual sincere face. Merlin pointed at the surroundings with a cubic light and said.

"There are already quite a lot of fomoires gathered. Looking at the flow of magic power, they are preparing to operate the gate."

Looking at the number of fomoires gathered in the mountain ranges of Katon, it seemed like they weren't able to operate the gate yet, so they had arrived just in time.

"So the fomoires have the soul fragment?"

"They may have a beast that has transformed with it or are holding it to gift it to the giants. But the latter is probable, right?"

Because there was no way the fomoires and the beast would look at each other in a friendly light.

Harabal nodded as Gandur answered at Siri's question.

"Good, whatever the case we just have to sweep up the both of them. It's good as its simple."

They just had to charge towards them and sweep them up. Although it was a really crude and simple way, it was really the way of Valhalla.

Reginleif smiled bitterly as if there was nothing to do about it and spoke to Tae Ho.

“Commander, our exact objective is to destroy the gate and stop the fomiores from escaping, and also retrieving the fragment of Garmr’s soul.”

It was more systemized but in the end it was similar to what Harabal had said.

“Merlin, is it possible to destroy the gate?”

The gate of the Tuatha De Danann wasn’t showing up above ground. It was inside the huge fortress that was dug underground just like the kingdom of the dwarves, Nidavellir.

The size of the fortress was so huge it wasn’t excessive to say that an entire mountain was used for it and it was as complicated as an ant tunnel.

Merlin frowned at Tae Ho’s question and answered.

“It won’t even budge if you touch the surface as it is a really huge gate. But if you destroy the core you will be able to stop them from operating it.”

As Merlin moved his hand, one of the mountain molds made of light got amplified and then a complicated structure showed up. It was a map made based on Merlin’s memories.

The core of the gate was located in the deepest cave of the fortress. It was right next to the huge gate that was installed in the floor.

“If the fomiores are planning to gift Garmr’s soul fragment to the giants, the possibilities of it being on that place would be the highest as it the place with the tightest security.”

“If we approach a little more I will be able to amplify the location.”

Ingrid answered at Bracky’s words and then she turned to look at

Tae Ho.

“Commander, if we move at the current speed a battle will occur in two hours. I hope you can choose the strategy for this battle.”

How they would fight there.

Everyone turned to look at Tae Ho. Tae Ho looked at the mold for a moment and then crossed his arms and said.

“Let’s go the Valhalla way.”

“Valhalla way?”

“Valhalla way.”

Just what was the Valhalla way?

Everyone could understand it excluding Merlin.

&

“Uwaaaaaaaaaa”

“Th, I can’t sense my lower body!”

“It’s thrilling! It’s always something new!”

Rains of steel fell down the sky. There were a total of three steel structures and they were the ones that were used in the battle in Kalliv’s castle.

They had sent back almost all of the steel structures back to Valhalla along the warriors, but Tae Ho had taken some just in case. Even if it looked harsh, it was worth having carried it.

The flying pirate ship and Scuabtuinne increased their speed in between the steel structures that were drawing a triangle. The speed was similar to the rains of steel but compared to the steel structures, there wasn’t anything to fix yourself to so the suffering was much bigger. The members that rode on Scuabtuinne, that didn’t even have a roof, screamed as if they were riding on a Black flash.

And in front of them, a red dragon charged. Tae Ho and the

intermediate ranked warriors, that could be called as the key to this battle, were riding on Rolo that had transformed into Shooting star, the owner of flames.

“Amazing Tae Ho!”

Bracky yelled sincerely. Siri gritted her teeth and closed her eyes and Harabal seemed like he would die at any moment because of his blue face.

Tae Ho and Rolo looked at the ground while sharing their senses. Tae Ho thought of the trauma generated when he rode on a Black flash but he could somewhat maintain himself calmly thanks to Rolo who enjoyed the thrill.

Tae Ho counted the numbers while looking at the ground that seemed like it would smash them at an amazing speed. He looked at the words covering the mountain range of Katon with the ‘eyes of the dragon’.

Kyaaaaa!

The cry that was like a scream was heard in several places of the mountain. The flying type fomoires surged up but they couldn’t do anything about the Rains of steel that were descending with an incredible speed.

Tae Ho chose the slope to descend on that was a bit higher than the entrance of the fortress. The reason was too clear.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The Rains of steel hit the ground. Rolo flew up before clashing against the ground and flew up the dust cloud, and Tae Ho extended a summoning rock and yelled.

“McLaren! I choose you!” (Ed note: Brock chose Onyx! 😊 Jk.)

The rock serpent that appeared in the air acted as he was ordered beforehand. It started to dig on the mountain rather than landing on the ground to carry Tae Ho.

(Ed note: Onyx used dig!)

The passage that connected the fortress were all complicated. As it was filled with the fomiores gathered from various places of Midgard, there was too much waste in time to charge through the entrance.

Because of that Tae Ho made things simpler like a warrior of Valhalla.

He would dig a new path.

He would destroy the normal passages and make a new path that connected to the core of the gate.

The sea serpent McLaren could move freely in the ground. Just by charging forward a tunnel of several meters was made.

“Amazing. Amazing. You are an exemplary warrior of Valhalla!”

Bracky yelled in joy and Harabal, that landed on the ground, started to throw up. Tae Ho sent back Rolo and then looked at the tunnel McLaren was making ahead of him.

“It seems like Garmr’s soul fragment is at the core of the gate, just like we expected.”

Ingrid got down from Scuabtuinne and spoke quickly. Tae Ho turned to look at the steel structures hurriedly.

“Rasgrid! I will entrust you with securing the path to retreat!”

“I will heed to your order!”

The fomiores that were near the entrance and scattered throughout the mountain ranges were flocking over there.

There were a lot of them but as most of them were low class, he could leave them to Rasgrid..

About half of the members that got down the steel structure stayed behind with Rasgrid. As three steel structures and one flying ship took place, it looked like a rather small fortress.

The warriors of Valhalla charged with Tae Ho at the front. As they had decided on the landing spot after looking at the map Merlin created, McLaren's path was mostly straight.

“The fomoires are coming!”

Merlin yelled running behind Tae Ho. Tae Ho could also feel that the flow of magic in his surroundings was becoming faster.

The tunnel McLaren made passed through the original paths. Tae Ho looked at the fomoires that were gathering with his ‘eyes of the dragon’.

They were stronger than the ones that were outside and also numbered the dozen.

It was quite a big number when they were the remnants.

But thinking about it contrarily, this was the remaining force of the fomoires as most of the fomoires outside of the mountain ranges of Katon were already subjugated by Tae Ho and Rasgrid.

“Gandur!”

“Leave it to me!”

As Tae Ho yelled, Gandur set up a defensive wall along the warriors of Valhalla that stayed behind once again. It was to retrieve a retreat path just like Rasgrid had done.

McLaren kept charging without stopping and reached its destination.

Kwagang!

A big hole pierced the core of the huge cave. McLaren jumped as if diving inside the ground and Tae Ho kicked the air and observed in front of him. There was quite a strong fomoiere at the end of the cave.

[Has planted a fragment of Garmr's soul]

[Korga]

Korga had somehow made it out alive from the battle of the castle of Kalliv. He had a fragment of Garmr's soul, that was emanating a bright red light, stuck in his chest that was broken because of the injuries.

“Crazy dogs of Valhalla!”

Korga cursed out. He could only do so. Crazy bastards. They really were crazy. For them to pour down from the sky and even make a new path. To make the defenses they had prepared become useless!

Korga increased his magic power. The red and black smoke that surged up from the soul fragment covered Korga's body and the flow of magic power filling up the cave became faster.

“For Asgard and the nine realms!”

Valkyrie Reginleif yelled and announced the start of the fight. The warriors of Valhalla charged towards the fomiores that were inside the cave and Merlin looked at the ground. The huge magic circle that filled the entire floor of the cave was emanating a golden light.

“It's right before the gate activates!”

Tae Ho charged forward instead of answering. He charged like a storm and his objective was Korga.

“Thoor!”

Bracky and Siri ran towards the direction Merlin pointed at. It was towards the altar that was at the middle of the magic circle.

“Idun's hunting dog!”

Korga charged towards Tae Ho instead of fleeing. Cuchulainn found the expression hunting dog to be funny and Tae Ho concentrated. He wasn't planning on wasting even a second on defeating Korga.

The smoke that was covering Korga poured out towards Tae Ho.

That thing, that got gathered at one place took the shape of a huge hunting dog in an instant, and Tae Ho swung the sparking Caladbolg and pulverized the smoke. He didn't stop at that and kept charging.

At that moment, Merlin that was checking on the magic circle, raised his head and Tae Ho could feel it instinctively.

The gate was already fully charged with magic power. They could activate it whenever they wanted.

In addition, Korga was already in front of it and there was quite a number of fomoires gathered.

But why weren't they fleeing? Were they waiting for other fomoires to gather? That Korga that even left behind his king and fled?

Tae Ho reached Korga and he got bewildered at the really fast Tae Ho and moved his hands urgently.

Tae Ho didn't parry his sword but cut off his arm. It was possible as he had entered Korga's reach even before he could react.

The arm of Korga that fell to the ground let out a blunt sound. Korga let out a terrible scream and Tae Ho tried to slash his chest upwards.

But Korga was a bit faster this time. He rather charged towards Tae Ho instead of stepping back. He released the red and black smoke once again and yelled after holding Tae Ho.

“Katas Krodaia!”

It was certainly the activating word for the gate. The golden light getting emitted from the magic circle got stronger and Korga tried to walk towards the inside of the magic circle even more.

Bracky destroyed the altar with his lightning hammer. Merlin hurriedly recited a chant and disturbed the flow of the magic power.

Tae Ho now understood what Korga was planning.

He wasn't simply planning to escape from Midgard. His real objective was to take Tae Ho's group through the gate and send them to Erin.

How?

Tae Ho stopped pondering about it. He emanated the divine power of Idun and endured it with his two legs. Tae Ho then faced Korga's pushing power head on and stabbed Caladbolg in his body and then made the lightning in Caladbolg explode!

Kwagagang!

Caladbolg was closer to being a rod that fired lightning rather than being a sword. Lightning exploded in the center of Korga's body and he couldn't advance anymore. Garmr's soul fragment fell from the huge hole that was made in his body. It seemed that just trying to push him rather than fighting Tae Ho had weakened him.

Tae Ho gulped dry saliva. He threw his body in between the hole that was created and then retrieved Garmr's soul fragment and turned around.

It seemed like it was thanks to Bracky for having destroyed the altar or thanks to Merlin's chant having taken effect that the golden light being emanated from the magic circle got really reduced. However Tae Ho could see it with his eyes. The gate had already activated and the transporting magic to Erin was still proceeding.

Korga had failed. He had failed from pushing Tae Ho to the magic circle and activate the gate.

But Tae Ho had to make a decision.

And the reason was really simple.

There were still people on the range of the magic.

Ingrid and the warriors of Valhalla. Bracky and Siri.

The transporting magic got completed. The light emanating from the magic circle became a pillar of light and surged towards the ceiling.

Tae Ho didn't hesitate. The moment the light surged up, he was already charging forward.

“My king!”

Merlin yelled however Tae Ho didn't stop.

Because he was a commander. No, even if that wasn't the case, he couldn't throw his allies in front of his eyes!

The pillar of light dispersed.

There was nothing in the place the pillar disappeared at.

&

The great barrier didn't stop things from going outside of it. If you wanted to enter inside the great barrier through the gate, your body and soul would get crushed after being hit by the barrier but fortunately, such things didn't happen when you got out of it.

It has been a long time since Erin got destroyed.

The fire of the Giant Surtr burned and destroyed Erin and the destroyed Erin broke down to pieces and scattered towards Asgard, Olympus and the temple.

Because of that, there was a possibility for the arrival gate to not exist. But fortunately enough a destination existed this time.

The pillar of light dispersed.

Moving a long distance through an incomplete gate was dangerous and hard.

The warriors of Valhalla let out rough breaths and sat on their places and Bracky and Siri also panted with hard expressions.

Tae Ho, that could jump inside the pillar of light by the breath of a hair, raised his head. He had heard Merlin's voice calling out to

him at the last moment.

“Erin.”

There was grief in that voice and sorrow about the reality.

The beautiful land he had seen from Cuchulainn’s memories didn’t exist anymore. The broken land, the land of death that has dried up everything.

The magic power in the ground was really weak and the sky and ground were completely gray.

Tae Ho looked at his surroundings with the ‘eyes of the dragon. He couldn’t see any fomoires, excluding the ones that were transported with him.

But the moment Tae Ho looked up at the sky he could understand why Korga tried to push Tae Ho inside the magic circle.

&

That was a really simple story.

You couldn’t send forces inside the great barrier as you pleased. It was also impossible to dispatch a giant strong enough to be able to defeat Idun’s warrior.

That’s why they would take him out of it.

They would hunt him down outside of the barrier.

Two of the Five Fingers were obsessed towards a warrior that had just become superior ranked. It wasn’t an easy thing to happen and because of that it was also hard to guess.

Korga had failed and Merlin had intervened with the transporting magic. Idun’s warrior appeared in a different place to the planned one.

But the important thing was that Idun’s warrior had gotten outside of the barrier.

The Giant of Night Avalt thought of when he first faced Idun’s

warrior. He observed him inside the darkness.

The place where the destroyed fragments of Erin gathered at in the ash sky and beyond the front lines. The land that was closer to Jotunheim rather than to Asgard.

“Idun’s warrior.”

The Giant of Earth Balgad said and descended on the completely gray land.

< Episode 30 – The knights of the round table (3) > End

Episode 30/Chapter 4: The knights of the round table (4)

Bracky remembered what happened a few months ago.

The Giant of Strength, Harad.

The things that happened when the black catastrophe appeared.

The warriors of Thor's legion were completely massacred. The lowest-ranked warriors couldn't endure the strength that was released when Harad descended.

The Shinsoo of Thor's legion, the Tanngnjostr, disappeared with a mere wave of Harad's hands. Even now, Bracky still couldn't understand what Harad had done to make the Tanngnjostr vanish.

And the same thing was about to happen.

It was a different strength, but it had a similar smell to it.

“Get back!”

Bracky yelled reflexively. He activated ‘Son of a God’ and gathered thunder in his hammer.

Back then, Ragnar had been with them. The legendary viking king had protected Bracky and the warriors.

“Move!”

Ingrid yelled. The inferior-ranked warriors, paralyzed by the crushing pressure which emanated from the sky, reacted to the Valkyrie's command. From where Ingrid stood, she threw her body behind Bracky's.

An earthen disaster descended as the ground shook at that moment. A deep earthquake churned the ground and a torrent of soil surged up into the air.

It was an incredible amount of dirt. It was the phenomenon created as Balgad, the Giant of Earth, descended to the ground.

Bracky looked at the airborne earth which seemed fierce as a wave and fast as a storm and swung his hammer. Lightning crackled before him and made an opening.

Kwagagang!

The hail of dirt pummeled the ground. From a distance, the earth shook like mad as yellow lightning surged furiously amidst the growing dust cloud.

Such was what Tae Ho saw. He, who was behind Bracky's group, moved towards Merlin as the wizard stabbed his staff into the ground. An invisible barrier coalesced in the shape of a wedge and cleanly split the wave of dirt around them.

Siri huddled behind Bracky and covered her mouth and eyes. Although the lightning had torn through the hail, no one could do anything about the dust. Breathing was impossible, much less opening one's eyes.

Merlin clutched his staff and trembled. His magic power had been halved after Erin's destruction, and sweat began dropping like rain from his furrowed brow.

Tae Ho's vision pierced outwards. He could see a red word beyond the dust that was smashing at Merlin's barrier.

The Giant of Earth, Balgad.

An existence comparable to even the Giant of Strength, Harad.

As he walked, a thick armor of rocks formed over his body.

What seemed like a mountain of rocks slowly closed in on them.

—

The gate connected with Erin had grown warped and distorted.

The several things Balgad and Avalt had prepared had also become a mess.

The reason the Giant of the Night, Avalt, stayed behind in

Jotunheim was to hide Balgad's battlefield with his specialty magic, darkness.

But now, the battlefield itself had been moved and Avalt couldn't see the effects of the darkness. Because of that, Avalt took his eyes off the battlefield and instead looked to a distant place.

The Giants weren't the only race the Great Barrier was obstructing. Ironically enough, it also obstructed the Gods of Asgard.

The giants at the front line sensed Balgad's sudden movement.

Similarly, the warriors of Asgard squaring off against the giants also noticed that a disaster had occurred in some far away place.

The giants didn't move, and the same went for the warriors of Asgard.

It was an obvious thing.

This place wasn't Asgard. The appearing of the Giant of Strength, Harad, in Asgard was a different case, but it wasn't such a matter for the giants at the front lines to intervene directly.

The Gods of Asgard could know of the events inside the great barrier immediately.

Still, while they knew the Giant of Earth, Balgad, had released his strength, they couldn't know who his opponent was.

But that was enough. There was enough time.

The Giant of the Night, Avalt, looked towards the Balgad and Idun's warrior once again.

But it was only for a moment. He could only return his gaze to the front lines.

There was a change at the front lines. The forces of Asgard had started to move.

'How?'

Like many instances, Avalt's confusion was an obvious thing.

They couldn't have imagined that there was a Goddess not only observing her warrior but was even conscious of his condition.

The moment Tae Ho left the vicinity of the Great Barrier, Idun could feel it. She could even connect with Tae Ho directly when he used 'Idun's warrior'.

Idun was instantly aware of the danger Tae Ho was facing at the front lines. She had ignored all procedures and requested for assistance with all her strength.

He plea reached out to the God stationed at the front lines.

That God didn't hesitate for a moment. He surged up with a crescendo of thunder.

—

The problem was time.

Time wasn't with either side.

The moment Thor moved, the giants at the front lines reacted. As Thor and the warriors of Valhalla marched, the giants blocked their path.

The Giant of Earth, Balgad, wasn't planning to face Idun's warrior alone. He had lined up his underlings in the arrival gate of Erin.

Balgad had moved alone because the destination had been altered, but it wasn't that his underlings had returned to Jotunheim or stayed immobile. They moved swiftly to chase the back of their master.

For some, time flowed quickly.

For others, time had slowed to a crawl.

Balgad, the Giant of Earth, was like a living mountain. He was the most massive Giant among the Five Fingers.

Distance shortened drastically with each of his steps. As the cloud of dust faded away, what Bracky and Siri saw was a towering wall of rocks that charged forward at incredible speed.

It wasn't something that could be countered like the hail of dirt.

Bracky steeled himself. He took a deep breath and gathered all of his strength in his right arm to try and slow it down as much as possible.

Faced with a decision, Siri transformed into a wolf. She bit Ingrid who stood closest to her.

Siri charged forward. Ingrid yelled and two inferior-ranked warriors hung onto Siri.

Bracky charged forward and smashed the ground with the strength he'd amassed; however, it wasn't to split the earth. The thunder that followed his strike hit the wall of rock that was charging towards them.

The Giant of Earth was unavoidably halted for a step. Bracky's full powered attack wasn't something easily disregarded.

But even so, it wasn't that he could defeat him.

Balgad, who'd been slowed in his advance, stomped the ground and the lighting subsequently scattered. An invisible force plowed toward Bracky.

Bracky set up a defensive layer with the God's power within him and endured the invisible force while being pushed back; however, the inferior-ranked warriors weren't so fortunate. Their bodies were pulverized and became lumps of flesh.

Bracky gritted his teeth. Siri, who barely managed to avoid the attack, raised her head and looked at Balgad.

Balgad ignored the two of them. He kicked the ground and charged towards Tae Ho.

40 meters.

The charging of a giant that tall gave a pressure that make it seem like the sky was crumbling.

Tae Ho didn't freeze, for he could hear Idun's voice. She didn't inquire his situation and instead worked harder to transmit to him more of her strength.

Tae Ho bellowed out Idun's name. He charged towards the Giant of Earth as an image of Ragnar appeared in his mind.

He had to do the same as he'd done. He had to protect his allies while facing the giant.

“Chant!”

Tae Ho transformed into a hawk and shot off at blinding speed. Balgad didn't miss Tae Ho and tracked him with his eyes. He swung one arm and rattled Tae Ho's path with the overwhelming wind pressure that followed and fired rock-hewn arrows from his other arm.

Tae Ho flipped his body mid-air. As he transformed back into a human, he created a shield with 'Warrior's Equipment' and covered his body. At the same time, he stretched out his left arm and called out.

“McLaren!”

The rock serpent that had been summoned in Midgard appeared in the gray lands of Erin.

As McLaren appeared, Tae Ho simultaneously gave a command and then threw aside the shield he'd blocked the rock-hewn arrows with before charging into the air.

McLaren circled the opposite direction from his master. Before the shield reached the ground, he'd already opened his mouth widely and gulped down Siri, Ingrid, and the surviving warriors of Valhalla. With them secured, he tunneled into the ground.

Balgad ignored the serpent. He gazed intently at Tae Ho and

swung his arm. Contrary to his size, it was a fast and precise movement.

Tae Ho gritted his teeth. He forcefully kept his eyes open and looked at the wall of rocks crushing the air before him. He then activated his rune magic in quick succession.

“Gant!”

A magical gale of wind was fired from Tae Ho’s arms. It wasn’t to push away the wall of rock but rather to increase his own fleeing speed.

Balgad’s arm passed beneath Tae Ho’s feet by a hair’s width. Tae Ho contorted his body once again and kicked the air to surge up. He reached a higher vantage point and unveiled a second summoning rock.

“Rolo!”

The gryphon fluttered its wings and picked up speed. Rolo cried valiantly instead of shrinking back before the giant.

Clutching onto Rolo, Tae Ho activated his saga. Rolo’s wings fluttered twice, and what were previously white feathers morphed to become the membranous red wings of a dragon.

Shooting Star, the master of flames.

It was different from when he’d summoned him to execute a lance charge. The true dragon wasn’t merely ten meters long. Now, while Rolo still wasn’t as big as the original master of flames, he had grown to a length of around twenty meters.

Rolo’s second flap of his wings created a great wind. It wouldn’t be improper to call it an eruption.

Sadly, Balgad was a bit faster. He didn’t falter at the red dragon which had appeared so suddenly before him and knew exactly what he had to do. He extended his hand towards the seething red dragon quickly and grabbed its wing with his huge hand.

With a mighty pull, he ripped it off. The red dragon cried as blood-like flames poured from the wound and dispersed into the air.

“Rolo!”

Tae Ho screamed out as Balgad swung his fist towards the falling red dragon. Rolo was slammed to the ground like a crumpled piece of paper.

The ground shook and Balgad tossed aside the wing he was holding. He then aimed a kick at the body of the red dragon.

Rolo tightened his muscles. He opened his mouth and fired flames towards Balgad.

It was a disastrous attack that could even melt rocks, but Balgad simply reacted to it calmly. He blocked it using his arms as a shield and didn't pause his advance at all. He then swung his arm in a wide arc to disperse the flames and grabbed onto the neck of the dragon.

To this, Tae Ho also reacted rather calmly and immediately removed Rolo's transformation. The moment Balgad grabbed the air, Tae Ho had sent back Rolo who'd crashed down after having lost a wing.

Balgad's eyes glinted at Tae Ho and the rock-hewn arrows were once again fired out of his armor like rain.

< Episode 30 – The knights of the round table (4) > End

Episode 30/Chapter 5: The knights of the round table (5)

Thor was going.

Thor would go.

Odin just spat out those words. He couldn't say anything else.

Adenmaha felt like she would go crazy at the anxiousness. McLaren hadn't returned, and Rolo had his chest crushed and lost a wing after a mere few seconds on the battlefield.

He had said that this battle wasn't much. That it would be fine as they would only clean up the remaining fomoires.

But that wasn't the case. Adenmaha read the memories of Rolo through the magic of the Tuatha De Danann and thus she could also sense the fear and despair Rolo had felt.

He was scared. So scared that a cry came out unconsciously.

She recalled that fateful day in Erin. The day that everyone near her had started to die.

Bracky, who was big and foolish but still held reliable qualities.

Siri, who seemed the toughest but was actually the most gentle.

And her master—

The stupid guy that only thought about Heda.

She felt like they wouldn't be able to return. At least one, or perhaps all of them.

Adenmaha hoped earnestly. She didn't pray for everyone to return safely. She only waited for Tae Ho to call her so that she would be able to do something on the battlefield.

But no matter how earnest she was, Tae Ho didn't call, and Adenmaha couldn't help but cry again.

—

The ash-colored lands were dyed in blood.

Bracky staggered to his feet. He fruitfully tried wiping the blood dripping from his head and tried to recall what had happened, but there were gaps in his fuzzy memory.

Like the landscape, the sky was ashen.

Bracky took a breath. He started to remember everything that had happened in a few minutes one by one.

Balgad had stomped on the ground and McLaren, who'd been hiding, was launched into the air.

Tae Ho had desperately recalled McLaren, but Balgad was a second faster. Balgad had gripped both McLaren's head and tail and pulled, tearing him in two. As McLaren was closer to being a spirit rather than a living being, his demise wasn't certain, but he couldn't know the details. McLaren disappeared and the ones within him had appeared in his place.

The inferior-ranked warriors of Valhalla had all died helplessly.

Bracky closed his eyes. The blood on his forehead wasn't stopping, and he couldn't activate 'The Son of a God Returns' as he had already used it today.

A fierce battle had occurred in a short time.

Ingrid was collapsed on the ground and unmoving. She had stopped the attack just before she'd lost consciousness. Bracky didn't check if Ingrid was alive or not. He just had to hope that she was. He spat out a mouthful of blood and breathed in pained breaths.

Tae Ho and Siri were still fighting. Siri's movements became really fast after she'd transformed into a wolf. Tae Ho mobilized several weapons on top of her as they fought together. It was like two people were fighting with one body.

Still, their battle against Balgad was disadvantageous to the extreme.

If they allowed even one attack to hit them, they wouldn't be able to fight again, but Balgad still continued unabated even after having received several attacks from both Tae Ho and Bracky.

But they still had to fight. Bracky gulped dry saliva for the last time and then charged towards Balgad.

“Mighty Thor!”

Bracky's roar passed in between Tae Ho and Balgad.

Balgad had almost all of his rock armor destroyed and looked at Bracky.

His appearance was that of a scaled-down Thor. Standing up time and time again after being hit and charging towards him was a terrible thing by now.

Balgad swung his hand. He used the intangible force to make a wall and strode forward while glancing at Idun's warrior at the same time. The guy that was riding on the golden wolf was holding a pair of swords.

Caliburn and Caladbolg.

Caladbolg's thunder was powerful. Although it wasn't to the point where Tae Ho could destroy a mountain with one attack like when Fergus Mac Roich wielded it, it couldn't be looked down on at all. Every time an attack landed on Balgad, a part of his armor was vaporized.

Balgad had to admit that the bastard was strong. So strong, in fact, that it was unbelievable for him to be someone that had just become a superior-ranked warrior.

That was why he had to kill him. He had to end the fight no matter what.

Balgad roared and swung his pillar-like arms. Deadly kinetic

energy was released alongside countless rock-hewn arrows. An earthquake followed that made their footing a mess.

It was an attack that came both from the sky and the ground.

Siri had succeeded in closing the gap between Balgad to dodge it until now. It wasn't easy, obviously, as a single error could result in their deaths.

Balgad thought that Siri would do the same, but he was wrong. Tae Ho lowered his posture while sticking atop Siri, and Siri turned around. Rather than charging towards the arrows she showed her tail and escaped.

The sudden change in their pattern caught Balgad off guard. In that brief moment of reprieve, Siri was able to put some distance between them and Balgad, and Tae Ho silently praised Bracky for stopping Balgad. Tae Ho turned to look at his back on top of Siri.

Then, above of the head of the mountainous Balgad and beyond the ash colored sky-Merlin's chant was completed. They hadn't fled from the battlefield because it was disadvantageous or because they were scared. It was because they believed in Merlin's magic.

What they called for was the disaster of the sky.

The Giant of the Night screamed in shock from within the darkness and Balgad then realized what manner of magic had sundered the atmosphere above him.

A meteorite summoned from beyond the sky was tumbling down. It fell at an unmeasurable velocity.

Even as he looked up, Balgad didn't waste any time. He kicked the ground and tried to dodge the meteorite.

However, Merlin didn't allow that. In the first place, he had prepared two magics. Although his magic had been halved, he was still the Great Magician of Camelot.

The shadows that pierced from the ground firmly rooted Balgad's

feet. They were obstacles that would only buy a few seconds.

But it was enough with just that. With an ear-deafening explosion, the falling meteorite directly smashed into Balgad, the Giant of Earth!

The resounding shockwave seemed to atomize all nearby matter, and the flames that burst out gulped down Balgad's figure.

Siri let out a sigh of relief and Tae Ho did the same.

However, Merlin couldn't do that. He knew otherwise, as he was the one that had activated the magic.

“My King!”

The moment Merlin called out, a dark figure sprinted through the fire.

A ten-meter giant whose skin was of rock.

It was the original body of the Giant of Earth, Balgad. The body that was forty meters tall had merely been his avatar.

The meteorite destroyed the avatar, but it couldn't break Balgad himself. The moment of the collision, Balgad released the remnants of his armor. His injuries were only minor.

Balgad rushed towards Tae Ho and Siri and swung his fist. Siri sprung off the ground reflexively, but she couldn't dodge the attack completely.

It was because the moment she threw her body to dodge the fist, pillars of rock also surged up and attacked her.

Subsequently, both Tae Ho and Siri skidded across the ground.

Merlin feverishly recited a new chant as Bracky unleashed his energy reserves to roar and charged forward.

Balgad didn't waste any time. He arched his spine and heaved a mighty hammerfist towards Tae Ho and Siri.

Thor couldn't reach them in time.

The giants at the front lines obstructed his path.

Idun had grown frantic and called out Tae Ho's name repeatedly.

However, Tae Ho couldn't answer her.

Adenmaha worked hard to save the life of McLaren who'd been torn apart. She kept reciting chants through a tear-stained face.

Tae Ho took a breath.

He hadn't died. He felt like his body was broken, but he was still alive.

With no regard for his own safety, Bracky had blocked Balgad's attack and even fired lightning to dissipate some of the impact.

He had fallen along with Siri, who was also alive. He could feel her shallow breathing as if it would cease at any moment.

Tae Ho checked his pocket. The pieces of golden apple had disappeared. It seemed like he had lost the pocket sometime during the fierce fighting.

Bracky couldn't endure for long. He collapsed after receiving an additional attack from Balgad. He was thrown far away and lay twitching on the ground.

Balgad looked at Tae Ho.

Tae Ho returned his stare, but he also glanced at the area beyond him.

He could see the red words approaching. It seemed like they were the underlings of Balgad.

He still had a summoning rock left, but he didn't call Adenmaha. He just squeezed out his concentration and activated a saga rather than calling her into danger needlessly. Five Valkyries doppelgangers, Heda included, were summoned next to Tae Ho.

They charged towards Balgad; however, they were just able to

buy a few seconds. They were mercilessly destroyed.

Tae Ho took a breath and swung Caliburn which still stuck to his hand.

To resist until the end.

To fight.

“Idun, Heda.”

His practice had taken fruits. Tae Ho called out Idun’s name first and then smiled. He faced Balgad, who was bellowing and closing in fast, and then produced the glory of Camelot.

Cuchulainn assisted with a bit of his strength, and Idun cried out and strengthened her divine power even further.

After that, shapes of people started to coalesce next to Tae Ho.

—

Erin was destroyed.

The fire of Surtr had burnt down everything.

The sky and the ground were dyed in ash.

But even that being the case, there was something that hadn’t changed.

—

A sentence of light appeared atop Tae Ho’s hand.

Erin’s successor.

The one who would receive everything from Erin.

Merlin, who had been reciting a chant, stopped moving his mouth unconsciously. The ones that had gathered next to Tae Ho had that effect on him.

The Knights of the Round Table.

Their souls that had been scattered, now returned.

Camelot was but a memory and Erin was destroyed; however, they didn't forget their pledge towards their king. Even if this land was dyed in ash, it was still Erin. It was the land in which the heroes of Camelot had given their ultimate sacrifice.

The glory of Camelot gave strength to the the Knights of the Round Table. Although dim, the shadows, who had gathered next to the Sword of Selection, Caliburn, regained the appearances of their previous lives.

They were in an incomplete state. It wasn't yet time for Tae Ho to fully achieve the power held by the King of Camelot. If this land wasn't Erin, they wouldn't even have been able to appear.

Nevertheless, now wasn't the time to wait for the king to come into his own.

The Knights of the Round Table expressed etiquette towards Tae Ho. Tae Ho didn't know them well, but Caliburn remembered them all. It was living proof of their legends.

“Our King calls for aid....”

One of the knights spoke in reverence. His expression filled with veneration towards Tae Ho, he stepped forward and then flew at Balgad.

“For the King of Camelot!”

The rest of the knights followed suit. The first knight to reach the giant was pressed down by Balgad's power and obliterated. Such was their limit as incomplete souls.

Nonetheless, the remaining Knights of the Round Table didn't waver. As one, they overtook Balgad's position like moths drawn to a flame.

‘Remember our names.’

‘Remember our stories.’

It was a complete massacre. With only their remnant souls, they

couldn't win.

But they didn't fear. They were rather happy that they could fight for Erin once more.

Caliburn taught to Tae Ho as much through the sentence of the Milesians.

The name of each one of them.

What they were going to do now.

Because of that, Tae Ho couldn't hold them back.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

Tae Ho uttered these words. He expressed his etiquette as a warrior of Valhalla.

The remaining Knights of the Round Table smiled gallantly. One who had remained beside Tae Ho until the end hit his chest as if imitating him.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

The knight charged. Seeing this, the Giant of Earth, Balgad, who'd known these knights well in battle, felt that their weakened souls were really quite pathetic.

The Knights of the Round Table were vanquished one by one. More than ten had been summoned, but now there weren't even five.

Tae Ho stood in place and looked at them.

The Knights of the Round Table were buying time, but not for Thor to arrive.

The underlings of Balgad were approaching and the red words in the sky loomed closer.

There was now only one remaining knight.

Balgad swung his fist and even he disappeared.

And then it arrived.

—

It was only one at first. The thing that fell from the sky hit Balgad in the back.

Caliburn explained the situation through the sentence of the Milesians.

The most loyal knight of all, Bedevere. The sword he didn't let go of until the end.

Balgad looked at the sky reflexively and then a second weapon pierced his shoulder.

The best archer, the Knight of Love, Tristan, and Fail-Not, the magical bow he once used.

As more weapons poured from the sky, the consecutive blows brought Balgad to his knees.

The sword of the most lofty knight, Galahad.

The Knight of the Long Spear, Perceval.

The magical sword of the Knight of Truth, Agravain.

The Knights of the Round Table were all warriors of Erin. The sentences of the Milesians they possessed summoned their weapons while burning the last of their souls.

Balgad hurriedly fended off the pouring weapons with his intangible force, but it wasn't easy. The strongest weapon of them all pierced the wall. No, it didn't only penetrate Balgad's shoulder but destroyed it.

The strongest Knight in the Round Table.

Lancelot's sword, Arondight.

Balgad let out a pained groan and at that moment, the underlings of Balgad arrived. More than ten giants jumped from the void and stood next to him.

Balgad let out a frustrated howl and his underlings charged towards Tae Ho.

Tae Ho took a deep breath. He swung Caladbolg and fired lightning.

It wasn't towards Balgad or his underlings. Tae Ho stabbed Caladbolg towards the sky and the lightning split the clouds.

Balgad couldn't understand Tae Ho's actions, and his underlings felt similarly. They just charged towards him.

But Merlin knew, for one sword hadn't arrived yet. There was still one last weapon.

The heavy clouds split and a column of light stretched from the heavens as the last weapon descended from the glory of the sun unto Tae Ho.

The knight that shared the etiquette of Asgard with Tae Ho—

The last words he left behind—

Tae Ho sheathed Caladbolg and Caliburn.

He remembered the story Caliburn told him and grabbed the sword that arrived in front of him.

Gallatin, the sword of the knight of the sun Gawain.

The story that is behind it.

The legend of the Knights of the Round Table.

[Synchro rate: 54%]

Idun's power entered the sentence of the Milesians and it added strength to the legend of Gallatin. From it, a new myth was born.

[Myth-ranked Saga]

You will grow stronger the higher the sun is, and at midday, you will be invincible.

Such was the legend of the Knight of the Sun, Gawain. Such was

the legend engraved within Gallatin.

[Sword of the Sun]

Tae Ho swung Gallatin, and the burning fury of the sun was unleashed upon Balgad and his underlings.

< Episode 30 – The knights of the round table (5) > End

Episode 30/Chapter 6: The knights of the round table (6)

The Giant of Night Avalt couldn't stand still. He didn't just watch like with Harad.

The distance between Jotunheim, the land of the giants, and the ruins of Erin wasn't short. It wasn't a distance one could traverse in an instant.

Besides, Avalt had his own agenda. While the underlings of the frost giant king, Harmarti, kept retreating and advancing against the forces of Asgard at the front lines, the Magician King, Utgard Loki, protected Jotunheim along with the Five Fingers. Stabilizing and facing Asgard in several battlefields was their task.

But they still had to move. There were still things they could do compared to that time with Harad.

Avalt emerged from the darkness and cast magic in rapid succession to contact the giants at the front lines.

Stopping Thor and the other rescuers was their task, but now they had to change the temperament of their actions.

Balgad needed assistance. They needed to protect him from Idun's warrior, and if that wasn't possible, they had to at least eliminate Idun's warrior completely.

Avalt left the castle of Jotunheim and felt anxious.

The flow of time was unabated.

—

A century passed since Erin's ruin.

The dark, dense clouds blocked the sunlight. Everything was dyed in ash and nothing good remained.

One couldn't find any trace of Camelot.

Erin, once known as a paradise, had completely disappeared.

However, it shone at this moment regardless of its century in shambles. The bright light of the sun fell down on the land dyed in ash.

The giant leading the charge lost his eyesight. Ironically, the strongest, brightest light he'd ever seen since being born had burned out his eyes and plunged him into darkness.

The giant couldn't see. The moment the sword of the sun cut his neck, a vision of light flooded his mind before his soul perished.

“Scatter!”

One of the giants yelled out, but it was pointless. The neck of the first giant rolled on the ground. Tae Ho, who'd stepped into the air, kicked back the shoulder of the collapsing giant and jumped up again.

The blade of Gallatin was shining, but that wasn't all. Slowly, a new blade of light began forming on top of it. The new sword of light was longer than Tae Ho was tall, and it seemed like it was moving on its own.

The sun shone upon Tae Ho. It gave him strength endlessly.

Meanwhile, Balgad had lost an arm to Lancelot's Arondight and couldn't believe the scene in front of his eyes.

Idun's warrior was certainly dying.

He was barely enduring by channeling the strength of the Goddess of Youth and Life.

That being the case, what exactly was this scene in front of him?

Thunder and gale protected the warrior of Idun, and the sword he swung once again cut off the head of another giant.

The giants didn't just die. They couldn't hit Tae Ho directly, but they attacked him by hexing curses on him. They depleted his strength and life by all kinds of negation magic.

There was another small giant like Sigil. Compared to the other giants that couldn't do anything against the small and nimble warrior of Idun, this giant could face him head on. They exchanged blows a few times and then he suppressed Idun's warrior with his overwhelming strength of a giant.

This exchange didn't occur without injury to either side.

Be it a large or insignificant difference, their efforts would deplete the strength and energy of each other.

Gallatin slashed the chest of the little giant. The giant spat out his last curse and collapsed. As he fell, the curse formed a blade of grudges and pierced Idun's warrior.

That's why he had to force himself to fight. As he himself was spending his strength, Idun's warrior was also growing weaker.

Or so he thought. Even though Tae Ho's body was a bloody mess and not unlikely to collapse at any moment, he didn't falter. Rather, Gallatin began emitting an even stronger light. The more they fought, the stronger Idun's warrior seemed to become.

'How?'

'Why!'

The twelve underlings became eight in an instant and the Giant of Earth, Balgad, knew well enough.

He remembered the day of Erin's destruction when he'd fought against the Knights of the Round Table.

This was the Knight of the Sun, Gawain.

He'd grow stronger as the sun rose higher, and when the sun was at its peak, he would be even more powerful than the strongest knight, Lancelot.

Balgad looked upwards unconsciously. He looked at the light of the sun that was splitting the sky and pouring down.

Time, it seemed, had abandoned the side of the giants.

As they fought, the sun rose higher with each passing second.

—

Idun clenched her chest. Her once immaculate form was now sweating rivets and she gasped for air while lying half collapsed on the floor.

Tae Ho was becoming stronger, but that strength was a double-edged sword. It wasn't a strength that Tae Ho's broken body could endure.

Idun had made it possible.

She squeezed out all her imperfect and immature power and sent it to Tae Ho.

The strong power of the sun destroyed Tae Ho's body, but the gentle power of life kept it together.

'My warrior, Tae Ho.'

Idun didn't turn to look at herself.

She reinforced the flood of energy into Tae Ho.

—

The number of giants was further reduced to only six. Tae Ho's breaths were haggard as he looked out in front of him. The body of the giant he had just defeated collapsed on the ground with a heavy rumble.

Tae Ho recalled Harad, the Giant of Strength. He was the first catastrophe he had faced upon entering Valhalla.

The Giant of Earth, Balgad, was someone comparable to Harad.

He wasn't merely a strong existence.

Balgad regained his composure and became decisively calm in the high-strung situation.

He layered his own strength as his subordinates perished. He had lost an arm thanks to Lancelot's sword, Arondight, and had

suffered a lot of damage because of the other knights' weapons, but he still had remaining strength. Tae Ho's strength was becoming stronger the higher the sun rose, but Balgad was currently still stronger than him.

The number of giants had now declined to four. Gallatin's light shone vibrantly as Balgad finally threw his hulking form towards Tae Ho.

At the forefront, his underlings didn't stand by idly. They fell back to clear space for Balgad and Tae Ho and slowly circled them in anticipation.

The battle between a giant and a human couldn't be compared to a fight between beings of the same size.

Where Harad increased his acuity and dexterity to enhance his battle prowess against comparatively tiny humans, Balgad increased an invisible strength.

The giants went all out. The Giant of Earth swung his fist and a fierce storm whipped up with the intention of shredding Tae Ho. As Tae Ho manipulated himself through the air, Balgad's cronies conjured waves of lightning, fire, wind and light. Taking advantage of their cooperation, Balgad closed in on Tae Ho once more. The profound magic that had accumulated in Balgad's eyes was unleashed and enveloped Tae Ho's body.

The devouring magic encircled Tae Ho as if a huge snake were trying to gulp him down. Within a split second, Balgad's malicious attack had succeeded in completely locking down Tae Ho's movements.

Balgad was now confident of winning. He anticipated savoring the impending sweetness of victory after countless sacrifices.

But it didn't happen that way.

Even through his calculated demeanor, Balgad had forgotten something very important.

The warrior of Idun wasn't alone.

The Knight of the Sun wasn't his only title.

He was King of Camelot.

The King's influence was everything!

Balgad screamed in pain as the several weapons still stuck in his body moved once again.

The souls of the Knights of the Round Table had disappeared after expending the last vestiges of their strength, but their wills remained in this place.

The power in the sentence of the Milesians moved their weapons.

The spear of Perceval pierced further into Balgad's arm and stopped the lightning being fired towards Tae Ho.

The sword of Bedevere carved through the back of Balgad. The magic sword of Agravain doused his flames, and the sword of Lancelot severed Balgad's magic power.

The sword of Galahad shielded Tae Ho's back, and the arrows fired from the bow of Tristan pierced the eyes and necks of the encircling giants.

The weapons of the Knights of the Round Table then gathered next to Tae Ho. They protected their King in the stead of their owners.

From his position, Merlin pushed out more of his magic power. He coated the weapons in his spells to aid in their movement.

He could sense the battle's conclusion was nigh. He knew he'd probably never again see the Knights of the Round Table gather next to the King, but it was enough with this.

Merlin didn't wipe away the tear which slowly passed down his wrinkled face. He thanked the miracle made possible through the knights' efforts, and he'd, in part, connected his magic with their weapons to be with them once more.

The underlings of Balgad had all collapsed. and the injured Balgad roared like a beast.

While Tae Ho couldn't hear the voices of the Knights of the Round Table, he could imagine their figures holding the weapons aiming for Balgad's throat.

Galatin had told him as much.

Tae Ho was a warrior of Valhalla before becoming King of Camelot, and he knew—

Saga.

Each saga retells the unforgettable story of a great hero.

Now that Tae Ho had remembered their names, they wouldn't be forgotten. They would live eternal lives through their stories.

The weapons flew forward.

It was the final assault of the Knights of the Round Table, one which decorated their legend.

Tae Ho also blurred into motion. He didn't fall behind the weapons in speed.

“Idun. Heda.”

He muttered two names beneath his breath and added more of his own strength to Gallatin. He then activated a slew of sagas.

[Saga: The Charge of a Warrior is like a Storm]

[Saga: Giant Killer]

[Saga: King of Camelot]

The weapons of the Knights of the Round Table impaled themselves deeply within the body of Balgad. Arondight pierced the chest of Balgad, and the sword of Galahad broke his knee.

Balgad went down on his functional leg and glared at Tae Ho with bloody malice. He reflected all his strength through his evil eyes.

Tae Ho didn't hesitate. The sword of Gallatin surged high into the air before penetrating downwards, destroying the giant's magic power and splitting his body while rupturing his heart.

“Idun's...warrior.....”

Balgad spoke for the last time. He was also a great warrior just like Harad had been. He smiled faintly instead of glaring resentfully and then collapsed after vomiting blood.

After a moment, Tae Ho descended to the ground and nearly fell over. He wanted to pass out, but it wasn't the time. He endured forcefully and steadied himself.

Tae Ho faced the cloud of runes that swarmed out of Balgad's body and closed his eyes for a moment. He moved his exhausted body to stab Gallatin in the ground and then looked at the weapons embedded within Balgad's body that lay still.

Tae Ho never really knew much of the Knights of the Round Table, but he remembered their names. He would know their stories through the weapons they'd left behind.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Tae Ho hit his chest and expressed etiquette.

He engraved the legend he'd witnessed, the last battle of the Knights of the Round Table, deep in his heart.

< Episode 30 – The knights of the round table (6) > End

Episode 31/Chapter 1: Idun's legion (1)

There were various reasons for why the front lines had stood at a constant state of adhesion since the Great War.

The force that was concentrated in Erin was split three ways into Asgard, Olympus, and the Temple. Otherwise, the nine realms wouldn't have cooperated with each other.

But this, like many others, was merely a secondary reason.

The decisive factor was much simpler.

A loss of power. A really big loss.

A hundred years had passed since the Great War, but Asgard still hadn't recovered from its previous state. The same held true for the giants of Jotunheim.

—

Tae Ho hit his chest and then collapsed, nearly unconscious. The current him didn't even have the strength to lift a finger.

“Heda.”

He murmured her name in a whisper-like voice. It seemed his calling to her was quite unavoidable, for he thought of Heda's face first whenever things became tough or painful.

Idun would forgive him as the battle had ended.

No, in the first place, she wouldn't have heard him as he had terminated 'Idun's warrior'.

Tae Ho laughed even though he felt he'd die and closed his eyes and prayed in thanks. The reason he could fight until the end was because Idun had supported him.

‘My Goddess, Idun.’

Tae Ho mumbled in a low voice while imitating Idun and then let out a sigh while closing his eyes. He felt the warmth of Idun that

remained in his chest and then closed his eyes more tightly and rose up.

He wanted to sleep and lose consciousness like this, but he couldn't. There were still things he had to do. The situation wasn't one appropriate for a warrior to take a rest.

He was really glad that he was a warrior of Idun. If it was any other warrior, they would have already expended all their strength and collapsed.

‘En Taro Idun.’

Tae Ho mumbled a slightly altered line from a game and then rose completely. He first sheathed Galatin in Unnir and then scanned his surroundings while tripping over himself.

“My King!”

Merlin was approaching. He was rather fine among the ones that'd been transported with him.

Tae Ho took out a bottle of water from Unnir and drank it. The feeling of cold water passing through his parched throat was so reinvigorating that his throat became clogged.

“My King.”

Merlin approached Tae Ho and used recovery magic on him. Although the spent energy didn't return, he did feel a lot better than before.

“We have to hurry.”

Merlin spoke with a face stained in tears. Tae Ho knew what he meant.

They had beaten the Giant of Earth, but it wasn't the end.

Erin was closer to Jotunheim than Asgard. More of Balgad's cronies remained, so they first thought of getting out of this place.

“I will retrieve the warriors.”

Merlin, knowing that Tae Ho understood his words, swung his staff and called a beast of light to take him elsewhere. His direction was towards Bracky, Siri and Ingrid.

Tae Ho breathed and then stumbled towards Balgad's corpse. He retrieved each and every weapon stuck in his body and placed them in Unnir.

There were eleven of them including Gallatin.

Tae Ho retrieved Arondight lastly and checked Merlin's progress by activating 'Eyes of the Dragon'. He felt like his head would split from using multiple sagas simultaneously, but there was still something he had to check.

He didn't see any red words, but Tae Ho felt uneasy. Just like Merlin had said, he felt like they should hurry.

"It seems like there's no problem in their lives."

Bracky, Siri and Ingrid were being carried by the beast of light Merlin had summoned. Their injuries were all severe, but they were breathing at least.

Tae Ho felt relief and sadness at the same time. They weren't the only companions that had come to Erin.

"The warriors of Valhalla taught me the way we have to go. But King, we have to first find a place to rest and hide ourselves."

Merlin looked at a certain direction for a moment. It was where the souls of the warriors went flying to.

Even Merlin didn't know where they were exactly as Erin was currently destroyed and in pieces.

"The worst case is inside Jotunheim or near it. Fortunately, that doesn't seem to be the case."

If that really was the case, reinforcements from the giants would have already arrived.

The reason they were looking for a place to hide and rest was

simple. Excluding Merlin, everyone else was really exhausted. Ingrid especially needed treatment immediately. If they left her like this, there was a possibility she may lose her life.

“Is there a place to hide?”

Tae Ho turned to look at the ashen surroundings. As the clouds that had been split for a moment gathered again, the sky took a dark color once more.

“We have to hide underground.”

It was the only answer as they couldn’t see any man-made buildings nor forests or mountains.

Merlin swung his staff to summon an additional beast of light and began to ride it. Tae Ho jumped atop the big wolf of light and followed Merlin’s back.

—

The Giant of the Night, Avalt, sensed the death of Balgad.

As he’d left the darkness and Balgad, whom he’d been sharing his vision with, had died, it was now impossible to observe the situation.

But regardless of that, Avalt didn’t stop moving.

He had to end it here. He couldn’t allow Idun’s warrior to return back to Valhalla safely now that Balgad had failed.

Avalt urged the underlings of Balgad and he even pressured his own subordinates.

In the destroyed Erin, below the ground of ash—

Before Idun’s warrior escaped, and before he recovered his strength—

Avalt covered himself in darkness once again. He crossed into the skies of Jotunheim in an instant.

—

Merlin first chose to distance himself from the battlefield. Whether they were underground or in the sky, if they were near the battlefield there was a high possibility Avalt could find them.

But even if that was the case, they couldn't go too far. He had to prepare a place for everyone to rest before the giants came and before Ingrid's state worsened.

Merlin stopped only after he was tens of kilometers away from the battlefield. After he recited a hole-digging chant on the ground, he took out a magical seed.

The seed that was the size of a finger grew bigger within a split second and became a five-meter tall fruit.

It was a magical resting place that was hard outside and empty inside.

Tae Ho remembered the tree houses he saw in Svartalfheim.

"Let's enter. I will cover ourselves with dirt after everyone has entered."

As Tae Ho took the group and entered the resting place, Merlin recited another spell. The resting place entered the hold he'd opened. Dirt covered the surface, and a safe place was made just like that.

"Amazing."

"This is just a secondary skill."

Merlin smiled bitterly as if he was embarrassed and then called a light elemental to brighten the room for them. It seemed like there was a part connected above the ground since the air was really fresh even though they were underground.

If the Knights of the Round Table had offensive roles, then Merlin's role was the equivalent of support. Originally, Merlin was more skilled in secondary magic like this rather than fighting.

Tae Ho laid down Bracky, Siri, and Ingrid before leaning against

a wall. He felt better than when he was on the open battlefield, and his eyes seemed to close on their own.

But it wasn't the time yet. It was too early for him to fall asleep.

Tae Ho took out a summoning rock. It was the last rock that contained magic power.

“Adenmaha.”

“You bastard!”

As soon as Adenmaha was called, she blinked her eyes a few times and then immediately cursed out Tae Ho. It wasn't because she felt enmity towards him, one could know just by looking at her teary face.

Adenmaha embraced Tae Ho and cried once again, and Tae Ho hesitated for a moment but then grabbed her shoulders. After he stroked her head a few times, Adenmaha gulped down her cry and said with a heavy voice.

“Rolo and McLaren are both alive. They are really hurt, but they aren't dead. They won't die.”

Rolo had a wing torn off and had his chest crushed, but there seemed to be no danger in his life after he ate a piece of a golden apple.

McLaren was split in two, but as he'd originally been more of a spirit than a creature, he was able to maintain his life.

In addition, there was also Scathach in Idun's residence. As she was specialized in the mystical powers of the Tuatha De Danann, her powers could prevent McLaren from dying pointlessly.

“Do you know how scared I was? Heda wasn't in the residence because she had business to attend to, and I can't even see Ragnar....my guys returned at the brink of death.”

Adenmaha spoke through sobs in Tae Ho's embrace. He could feel how scared she was, as she hadn't had anyone to help calm her

down.

“Sorry.”

“Leave it. I have to do what I came here for.”

Adenmaha got out of Tae Ho’s arms and then breathed in after covering her face with her two hands. When she barely managed to calm herself, she looked at Tae Ho and continued.

“There are a few pieces of a golden apple remaining that Heda gave me.”

Adenmaha took out a piece and gave it to Tae Ho. Although it was as small as a sugar cube, it was enough to have some effect.

While Tae Ho wolfed down the piece of golden apple, Adenmaha greeted Merlin with an embarrassed face and then turned to look at Bracky, Siri, and Ingrid lying on the floor. She was wondering about how she should feed them the golden apples.

It wasn’t easy to feed medicine to a person that had passed out. The golden apple was very much an item that would only work if one chewed it.

Tae Ho grasped his memories for a moment and then remembered how Heda had fed him while he was unconscious.

“Uh, mm.....”

“Go away. I will feed them. Don’t even dream of it.”

Adenmaha spoke rather sharply and then chewed a piece of a golden apple and fed Ingrid and Siri.

Tae Ho got embarrassed from nothing and turned his head as Merlin cleared his throat.

The effects of the medicine were clear. The states of Ingrid and Siri started improving at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Adenmaha wiped off her mouth with the back of her hand and then looked at Bracky. Tae Ho got nervous unconsciously, and

Merlin tried to say that he could grind the apple to feed them in a liquid state.

But Adenmaha opened her eyes sharply and then hit the shin of Bracky.

“I know that you are fully conscious. Don’t try to act.”

Adenmaha spoke scarily and then threw the last piece of golden apple in his mouth.

“Sob, why is my body this resilient?”

As Bracky barely managed to chew the golden apple, he mumbled with a mournful expression. Tae Ho just looked at him with lukewarm eyes instead of cheering him up.

Adenmaha wiped off her mouth once again and changed the subject.

“Scathach said that Idun-nim would certainly do something; perhaps, a rescue team is already coming our way.”

Tae Ho nodded. He told Adenmaha and Merlin what Idun kept repeating in the middle of the battle.

Thor was coming. Thor was coming, so endure a bit more.

Idun wasn’t someone to spout nonsense. The faces of Adenmaha and Merlin grew comparatively bright.

But it was after that—

Merlin raised his head, and Adenmaha shrank down unconsciously.

Tae Ho could also know. He couldn’t see it, but he certainly felt it.

The giants had arrived. It seemed like there was no one as strong as Balgad among them, but their numbers weren’t low at all.

Tae Ho grabbed the stiff hands of Adenmaha and whispered.

“Adenmaha, return for now. I will entrust Rolo and McLaren to

you.”

Adenmaha wanted to protest, but she wasn't a child. She bit her lips and then nodded.

She placed her lips on Tae Ho's forehead as a Valkyrie before speaking lowly.

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

Tae Ho also did the same for Adenmaha, and she sniffled once more and disappeared.

Bracky held his breath while shutting his mouth, and Merlin also stayed silent. Tae Ho closed his eyes and relaxed his body.

An indeterminate amount of time passed.

The number of giants continued to increase, and now, the sound of the ground ringing was heard. They could soon hear the noise of the ground being displaced.

Bracky gritted his teeth and glared at the ceiling. Merlin gripped his staff tighter, and Tae Ho's face grew determined.

The shaking got fiercer. They could feel the giants gathering.

But right at that moment—

Bracky shot to his feet and raised his arms in silent cheer. Tae Ho also clenched his fists in excitement.

Far away, from the direction the souls of the warriors of Valhalla had headed to.

A string of thunderclaps was growing closer.

< Episode 31 – Idun's legion (1) > End

Episode 31/Chapter 2: Idun's legion (2)

The fight began with a loud explosion followed by huge shockwaves that swept into the ground. The magic shelter Merlin had made shook as if in the midst of an earthquake.

Merlin leaned his back on the wall and began reciting a spell while looking up. The apple-yellow ceiling grew transparent and the scene above the ground was revealed.

Thor was fighting-no, he was massacring the giants single handedly.

With every swing of Mjolnir came a crushed head, shoulder, or chest. The giants couldn't even begin to dare confronting the red-caped warrior.

“Ohh! Thor!”

Bracky let out an awed exclamation. Thor jumped up as if answering the call of Bracky and then hit down the ground with the thunder encasing Mjolnir. A fearsome lightning fell down and spread across the ground before surging up and sweeping away all of Thor's surroundings.

The giants that were swept up by it couldn't even scream. They vomited black smoke and then collapsed on the ground.

A force of twenty giants wasn't to be scoffed at, but the scene of the fearsome lightning surging up with the sound of the thunder was really amazing.

It was a literal myth.

A story of the Gods.

Tae Ho unconsciously gulped dry saliva upon verifying the appearance of Thor, God of Thunder.

“Old man Merlin! We have to get out quickly!”

Bracky urged Merlin. Merlin turned to look at Tae Ho instead of

answering immediately as if asking his opinion, and Tae Ho nodded hurriedly.

Merlin then began chanting. Tae Ho carried the still unconscious Ingrid and Bracky held Siri on his shoulders. It looked like Bracky was transporting a prey he had hunted instead of carrying a person, but it was unavoidable for him as he had to at least be able to use a hand freely.

As Merlin finished his chant, the magic shelter started to go up little by little. When they saw the scene above the ground through the transparent ceiling, they saw that the ground was destroyed.

Fortunately, Thor didn't attack the magic seed that sprouted up from the ground.

It was obvious for him not to. Just like Idun could feel Tae Ho, Thor could also feel his warriors, Bracky included.

In the first place, Thor had known the location of Bracky ever since he'd landed.

As soon as the magic shelter surfaced completely, Thor dropped Mjolnir a bit and then looked at the sky.

“Father!”

Bracky yelled as soon as the wall of the shelter opened. Thor smirked at him as he treated all the warriors in his legion as his own sons and then looked at Tae Ho and Merlin.

“You became unbelievable strong. I almost couldn't recognize you.”

Thor said. He didn't know the process, but he knew the results well.

Tae Ho and his group had won with the Giant of Earth, Balgad, as their opponent.

The corpse of Balgad was proof of that.

Tae Ho hit his chest first and expressed etiquette. Merlin moved

to the front and spoke.

“It’s been a long time, God of Thunder.”

“Merlin, the great magician of Camelot. It’s good to see that you are safe.”

The relationship between Thor and Merlin wasn’t that deep. The day of Erin’s demise, they’d fought in different places and they didn’t meet at all after that. They just conversed a few times when Camelot still existed before Erin got destroyed.

But it was enough with that.

Thor was sincerely happy about Merlin’s safety.

It wasn’t because of his utility. Even though the place they fought on was different, he was still his comrade in arms and at the same time, the last survivor of that beautiful and great Camelot.

Thor respected the Knights of the Round Table. Each of them were worthy of admiration and their King, Arthur, had been an especially exceptional person.

Merlin’s eyes turned red at Thor’s good will. It seemed that because it hadn’t been long since he witnessed the last moments of the Knights of the Round Table, or perhaps because of the good will the strongest God in Asgard showed him, his heart had been deeply moved.

But it wasn’t the time to be sentimental. Merlin organized his emotions after putting a deep smile and then shot a question at Thor.

“God of Thunder, do we have to create a path to escape?”

Thor nodded heavily at Merlin’s question.

“That’s right. This place is closer to the territory of the enemy, and in addition, they are surrounding us more and more. I came alone while creating a path as the situation was urgent.”

Thor spoke quickly and then drew a rune in the air. A map made

of light appeared from that rune.

Erin was broken and scattered into several realms. Some of the fragments landed on the ground or the sea, but most of them were in the sky. Just like islands in the sky.

The giants of Jotunheim occupied a part of the region that connected Erin and Asgard after the islands settled.

The fragment of Erin the group was currently located was in that central region, and just like Thor had said, they were closer to the territory of the giants.

As Thor moved his fingers again, a blue and red arrow appeared in the map.

The rescue team that had Thor as a vanguard had left the front lines of Asgard, although a part of their forces had collided with the giants in the front lines.

Obviously enough, the two forces collided in the central region and a battle erupted.

“It doesn’t seem like the giants will give up easily. Quite a large number of them have started to move from the rear.”

A great host of giants was approaching from behind the ruins of Erin. The front lines dispatched additional forces, and Asgard also dispatched more reinforcements as they couldn’t just allow the rescue team to get massacred.

The scale of the battle had increased from just the elites to two great armies being mobilized to face each other.

“So this fight is what started it all.”

Merlin spoke with a bitter face and Thor nodded.

“But they won’t be able to end it immediately. If we escape from them, there is a high possibility for them to give up on the attack.”

The giants didn’t go on the offensive ignorantly. They analyzed the gains and losses of their forces and distinguished when they

had to attack and retreat.

Asgard and Jotunheim mobilized great armies, but it was still at the stage where they were simply moving. Mobilizing a great army with great risks was something burdensome for both sides.

Conquering a bit more of land in war wasn't that important, contrary to popular belief. Above all, removing the force that protected that land was much more important.

This held true even more so in a war destined to eliminate one of two sides. Such was the war between Asgard and Jotunheim.

Because of that, there was a high possibility for the giants to retreat when Tae Ho's group escaped from this place just like Thor had said.

"We can end the explanation of the situation here right? We have to hurry."

Those words weren't wrong. The giants would be moving even at this moment.

Thor floated into the sky slowly and looked at Merlin and Tae Ho alternately. Merlin answered his eyes that were asking if they didn't have anything to ride on.

"Mahariku Karvan Diem."

As Merlin recited a chant in a low voice and swung his staff, one of the jewels engraved in the staff broke and a huge eagle of light was summoned.

"Get on."

It was a really huge eagle with a wingspan of over 40 meters. It was enough to carry Tae Ho's group in its back.

Thor watched Tae Ho and Bracky get on the eagle and then surged up to the heavens.

The eagle fluttered its wings. When it flew up high, they saw a dried up continent next to the destroyed fragments of Erin.

Thor took the lead and the eagle followed it back. Tae Ho sat next to the lying down Ingrid and looked back. There were hundreds of red letters in the air behind them. They were all flying-type monsters such as harpies and wyverns.

In addition, they didn't only come from the back. A huge army that seemed like it would dye the sky in red approached from the sides.

Tae Ho could feel his mouth dry up. Lookin at them one by one, they weren't even that strong, but there were just too many of them. In addition, if they got caught here, there was a high probability for them to face an army composed of strong giants.

Tae Ho gulped dry saliva and took a deep breath. Even though he had eaten a piece of a golden apple, Tae Ho didn't have the strength to fight anymore as he had spent too much stamina and concentration. But he still had to fight. Tae Ho unsheathed Caladbolg from Unnir.

“Oh Idun!”

Tae Ho called out Idun's name in a low voice and concentrated. It was to borrow her strength as his own strength was almost depleted.

But something felt off. It was hard to sense Idun even though he had activated 'Idun's Warrior'. The strength that was transmitted was so low it couldn't even be compared.

Was it because he used the saga too recklessly? Or there was another reason for it?

Tae Ho dispeled 'Idun's Warrior' in the uneasiness. Thor, who was flying next to Tae Ho, looked at him and then glared at the direction the monsters were approaching from and spoke out.

“Go first. I will tie them up.”

Tae Ho couldn't respond immediately to Thor's words. It bothered him to leave Thor alone before thousands of enemies,

and he was doubtful that Thor would be able to tie all of them up.

Moving in the air was different to moving on the ground. On the ground, you could tie down the enemy by blocking the path, but how were you supposed to do it in the air?

As Tae Ho hesitated, Thor laughed magnanimously.

“Did you forget? I’m the God of Thunder.”

He didn’t explain anymore than that. Tae Ho hit his chest twice and Bracky did the same.

“Go!”

Thor yelled and then gathered lightning in Mjolnir. The eagle of light increased its speed and Tae Ho held Ingrid more tightly and lowered his posture.

It was then-

Kwagagagagang!

An overwhelming sound of thunder rang behind them. The lightning covered the sky and dyed the world in blue momentarily.

Thor didn’t think of blocking the path. He was planning to pour out attacks so strong that the flying monsters wouldn’t even think of ignoring Thor and attacking Tae Ho’s group.

“Thor! Thor! Thor! God of Thunder!”

Bracky whopped like a joyful youth and thunder was heard as if answering his call.

Merlin started to sweat and squeezed out all his magic power. The eagle of light increased its speed a bit more and the sound of thunder became more distant.

Tae Ho looked at the front in the sharp wind and gritted his teeth unconsciously.

He could see red words in front of them. They were comparatively lower in number, but Tae Ho could feel his mouth

dry up.

They weren't wyverns or harpies but giants. There were some giants that had wings and others that rode on huge monsters which wouldn't be inappropriately compared to dragons.

Their number was merely thirty, but the pressure they gave was really amazing.

"Take a turn! We have to evade fighting!"

Bracky yelled. His words were right, but it wouldn't be easy to do so. The moment the eagle changed directions, the giants started to increase their speed and fired several weapons made with magic towards them.

Light, lightning, and flames attacked them. The spears and arrows poured down like a rain that would tear the ground.

Merlin concentrated, and Tae Ho panted and activated his saga. He assisted the flight of the eagle with 'One who Controls Dragons'. They dodged the attack of the giants with a flashy series of maneuvers.

Unfortunately, the consecutive dodging motions resulted in a decrease in speed.

The distance between the giants was shortening. The sound of thunder wasn't heard anymore and new forces appeared from the front. They were the same flying-type monsters that appeared behind them. Red words were also seen from the sides, and Tae Ho couldn't be certain but he thought they also resembled giants.

Bracky gritted his teeth and then sucked in air and gathered lightning in his hammer. It was to pass through the flying-type monsters instead of fighting against the giants.

The sound of thunder was heard once again from far away. Thor was certainly approaching them.

Tae Ho raised Caladbolg and then squeezed out all of his strength

and created lightning of a golden color.

They would pass through the monsters like this.

The monsters screamed and charged, and the giants kept pouring down attacks regardless of the monsters being hit by them or not. Some of them only focused on flying and closed the distance with Tae Ho's group.

Bracky raised his hammer. Tae Ho also raised Caladbolg high in the sky.

At that moment, Tae Ho looked off toward a distant place beyond the flying-type monsters and suddenly cheered.

The ones coming from the front weren't only enemies.

Thor wasn't the only rescue squad!

Tae Ho saw them. The hundreds of steel warriors flying in the sky and the warriors of Valhalla riding on big hawks in their midst.

He also saw the one in front of them. The one that entered Tae Ho's eyes first.

"Damned disciple. You will only get satisfied after making your ill master work hard, right?"

Ragnar appeared on top of a white hawk and smirked. He charged towards the army of monsters and activated his saga.

[Myth-ranked Saga: Viking King]

"Go! Warriors of Valhalla!"

The Viking King's order was heard, and the warriors of Valhalla answered to his absolute command.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms!"

At the center of the battlefield, both sides clashed in the air and a ferocious battle began.

< Episode 31 – Idun's legion (2) > End

Episode 31/Chapter 3: Idun's legion (3)

A battle that took place in the air was different to one which occurred in the ground.

Compared to the ground which acted as a solid barrier, the concept of 'height' was reintroduced in the air.

It was possible to move more three-dimensionally so there was obviously a difference depending on the placement of one's forces and mobility.

The monsters didn't utilize this beside Tae Ho's group to block them directly, but they instead flew both below and above them. It was just like making a big wall.

The warriors of Valhalla clashed against the monsters. The giants kept pouring out attacks towards them, and the sound of thunder approached from behind.

Tae Ho looked at the scene before them on top of the eagle of light. Half of the monsters clashed against the warriors of Valhalla, and the other half continued to maintain the wall.

It was a temporary wall. Compared to the troop in the ground, the troops in the sky had to move endlessly.

The wall attacked Tae Ho's group. They covered them from above and below like a hand holding a fist.

Merlin gritted his teeth and increased his speed even more. Bracky and Tae Ho released lightning at the same time and opened up a path.

Kwagagagagang!

The monsters hit by the lightning fell down, but it was also different compared to the ground. The monsters that were outside of the range of the lightning started to charge towards the eagle of light. If one stayed still, they would get suppressed in the air.

The eagle fluttered its wings. Bracky fired lightning once more and Tae Ho gathered his strength. Merlin made the eagle fly higher.

Kwagang!

This time, Tae Ho released lightning from Caladbolg. A big hole was created among the monsters charging from above and the eagle entered that gap. It fluttered its wings strongly and passed the monsters.

But it lasted only a moment. As soon as they left the chokehold of monsters, something else charged towards them.

“Be careful!”

Bracky yelled. They were the giants that were flanking them. The giants closed the distance once again and poured down arrows and magical attacks. It didn't matter if the monsters died or not, it would be enough if they caught Tae Ho's group.

The eagle staggered. The attacks that contained an overwhelming strength behind them were threatening even if they didn't hit directly. The flight of the eagle became more risky.

“Don't stop!”

Ragnar's voice was heard from far away.

The warriors of Valhalla were crashing down on the monsters and advancing. The warriors riding on hawks formed the formation's insides, and the ones outside were the warriors of steel.

The Steel Warriors, that had steel wings in their backs, didn't hesitate for even an instant. They pierced through the monsters and grew closer to Tae Ho's group. Immediately after, they became shields that stopped attacks from reaching them.

A spear thrown by a giant pierced the body of a Steel Warrior. No, the Steel Warrior threw its body towards the spear that would

have hit the eagle otherwise.

It was the same for the rain of lightning, flames, and light. The warriors gathered at one side to form a shield and then protected Tae Ho's group.

“Go! Go! Go!”

The Steel Warriors yelled. They didn't disperse the shield wall even as they were being destroyed by the attacks. It was a sacrifice to save Tae Ho's group.

‘Why?! Why do they have to go to such lengths?!’

Tae Ho couldn't ask. He gritted his teeth and looked ahead. He could see Ragnar and the warriors of Valhalla using their sagas to fight against the monsters.

The monsters screamed and fell down, but some warriors of Valhalla also died in that confrontation. The soul of the warriors that lost their bodies turned to become a blue light and went to Valhalla.

“Go!”

The Steel Warriors yelled once again. They stayed behind the group. They then gathered once again to take the form of an arrow and then charged towards the giants.

The giants destroyed those Steel Warriors. They swung their huge, blunt weapons to rend the armor and cut off the wings with strong magic.

The Steel Warriors also didn't stay still. They attacked the monsters carrying the giants and brought them down. They slashed their chests and tore off their necks with their swords and axes.

“Tae Ho!”

Ragnar yelled. He reached the front of Tae Ho's group and then pointed to the direction from where the warriors of Valhalla had

came with his viking sword, Ulfberht.

“Go!”

The objective of this battle was to rescue Tae Ho’s group. The scale became bigger than expected, but Ragnar didn’t miss the main point.

‘It’s just like Ragnar said! If we reach the objective, the warriors of Valhalla will also retreat!’

Cuchulainn spoke suddenly. Tae Ho turned to look at the Steel Warriors but then gritted his teeth and looked at the front. The eagle passed the warriors of Valhalla and went towards the rear.

“Warrior Tae Ho! Wait for a moment!”

When he raised his head to see who had called him, he saw some Valkyries and Steel Warriors. The Valkyries were flying even though they hadn’t taken the shape of swans as if they had used a special magic.

As Tae Ho made the eagle stop, the Valkyries approached them alongside the Steel Warriors. There was a familiar steel structure being carried in the backs of the three-meter tall Steel Warriors.

It was none other than the Black Flash.

“Get on. We will evacuate you first.”

It was a blunt way of speaking as if they wouldn’t allow any objections. Tae Ho first placed Siri and Ingrid in the Black Flash. As there were only two Black Flashes, he put the smaller people in a single structure and the remaining three people each rode on one.

‘Listen well. You don’t have the strength to fight right now. You will be of help the faster you get out of the battlefield.’

Cuchulainn sensed Tae Ho’s rejection towards escaping before speaking bluntly. Bracky and Tae Ho had spent all their stamina and concentration, and they’d barely managed to recover while

releasing some lightning towards the monsters. They couldn't fight any more than this.

Right then, a deafening clap of thunder was heard from behind. Thor had returned.

But he wasn't the only one that reached the battlefield. Tae Ho could see the red words that were like blood through 'Eyes of the Dragon'. They were certainly the underlings of the frost giant leader, King Harmarti.

The giants and the monsters kept coming, but reinforcements from Valhalla were also approaching.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

A Valkyrie laid down Tae Ho and spoke proudly. She closed the lid even before he could answer and then recited a chant to fire the Black Flashes.

The Black Flashes flew in the air at an astonishing speed. Tae Ho looked at the existences flying above him through the spear that was hanging on the front. There was a really clear green word shining from among the warriors of Valhalla.

[God of Hunting]

[Ullr]

Thor wasn't alone. Ullr had also participated in this battle.

Ullr pulled on the string of the bow loaded with multiple arrows of light and Tae Ho couldn't see more than that. The speed of the Black Flashes became faster.

The sound of thunder became more distant, and the yells of the warriors and screams of the monsters also dimmed.

Tae Ho closed his eyes and breathed some air. As soon as he released 'Eyes of the Dragon', great exhaustion came at once.

They traveled for a long while.

The Black Flashes that were flying in the sky began to descend to the ground. It wasn't towards one of the bases in the front lines of Asgard.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

A rough and harsh landing occurred. Tae Ho landed first and then closed his eyes tightly once and opened the lid. As he did so, he saw people running towards them, and surprisingly enough, one of them was someone they all knew.

"Idun's commander."

It was Valkyrie Hildegarde of Freya's legion. She helped Tae Ho get down from the Black Flash and then placed her lips on Tae Ho's forehead.

"May Freya's blessing accompany you."

It wasn't a simple blessing. Tae Ho received the blessing without resisting as if it was a habit and then closed his eyes unconsciously. It was a strong sleeping magic.

"Rest."

Hildegarde's voice passed by his ear with a low tone.

And Tae Ho fell in a deep slumber like that.

—

Time flew by.

Tae Ho opened his eyes slowly and then closed them again. He couldn't form thoughts about anything. When he woke up from a sleep after not dreaming of anything, this always happened.

Tae Ho closed his eyes for a moment and didn't think of anything. It seemed like he was trying to sleep again, but he couldn't do so; rather, his senses that were asleep started to awaken one by one.

Sound, taste, smell.

Tae Ho opened his eyes slowly. His back hurt. It was a common symptom one faced after having slept for a long time.

Everything that touched his skin felt nice and soft. It seemed like they were sheets and blankets of good quality.

Tae Ho closed his eyes again. He let out a long sigh and then rose up.

“So, you woke up.”

A voice was heard next to him. Tae Ho opened his eyes in a still confused state and then looked around. He saw a familiar face which completely alerted him.

“Ragnar!”

He raised his voice unconsciously. Ragnar placed a chair next to the bed and then frowned before continuing.

“I’m merely exhausted. You don’t have to worry.”

Just like he had said, he didn’t seem that worse for wear, but Tae Ho could feel his exhaustion from his posture and heavy voice.

Tae Ho was still thankful that Ragnar was safe. He sat a bit properly and then asked Ragnar about the obvious.

“How did the battle go?”

“We fought hard and then retreated. That happened three days ago.”

Tae Ho put on an absent-minded expression at Ragnar’s words, but it only lasted a moment. The exhaustion from that day was really severe. It wouldn’t be weird to have heard that he had been sleeping for three days.

“I saw Ullr-nim.”

Tae Ho spoke. That scene was really clear, perhaps because he’d seen him just before he’d fallen asleep.

Ragnar nodded.

“Right. It was quite a big battle. It was one of the biggest battles of all which have occurred in dozens of years.”

Basically, the number of forces the giants dispatched had numbered in the tens of thousands. Most of them were monsters, but still, it had reached that number. In addition, all the monsters that were dispatched in this battle were flying-type monsters. The meaning of that could only be significant.

“The rest of the members are safe. They woke up earlier than you.”

Ragnar smirked as he spoke. It was a joke to brighten up the mood, but Tae Ho let out a sigh of relief and then his face revealed sadness.

Ragnar knew why Tae Ho looked as he did. He knew too well what Tae Ho had seen before he'd departed from the battlefield.

“Don't blame yourself. They died in a meaningful battle.”

The Steel Warriors had thrown their lives away to protect them.

It wasn't only one or two. The number Tae Ho had seen had numbered in the hundreds.

How many of them could have made it back safely? Just how many had lost their lives?

The reason they went to the battlefield was to save Tae Ho. It was really fortunate, but he couldn't help but feel a bit guilty.

Just why did they go to such lengths? Why did Asgard sacrifice hundreds of Steel Warriors just to rescue Tae Ho?

Ragnar lit up a pipe cigarette and elaborated.

“We rescued two warriors that had high possibilities of becoming superior-ranked warriors and a warrior that had already reached the level of a superior rank and one who'd certainly become a top-ranked warrior at that. With this alone, you can say that it's enough.”

Not all the warriors that entered Valhalla could become superior-ranked warriors. Only a very small minority achieved such a level.

There was nothing to say about top-ranked warriors.

If they could sacrifice hundreds of inferior-ranked warriors to obtain a top-ranked warrior, Valhalla would make the same choice every time.

Ragnar looked at Tae Ho's eyes for a moment. He exhaled the smoke from the cigarette and continued.

"The Steel Warriors can't use sagas."

It was short, but his words Tae Ho couldn't refute.

The root of the warriors of Valhalla were their sagas. It wasn't excessive to say that the strength of a warrior that couldn't use their saga was halved-no, perhaps even a mere third of their prowess remained.

But the Steel Warriors couldn't use their sagas.

Naturally, the warriors of Valhalla had more worth than the Steel Warriors did for Valhalla.

The reason Ragnar retired instead of dying while fighting was to preserve his saga. Valhalla preferred Ragnar who could manifest his saga, albeit sloppily, over a Steel Warrior in his place.

"There should be many things you are curious about, but let's leave those for another time. Before that, I have things I need to know."

Ragnar changed the subject forcefully. He placed down the pipe cigarette and then got closer to Tae Ho and inquired bluntly.

"How did you win?"

The Giant of Earth, Balgad, was one of the Five Fingers of the Magician King, Utgard Loki.

He was a strong opponent who only the most experienced among

the superior-ranked warriors could face.

Even though Tae Ho had Bracky, Siri, and Ingrid by his side, it was still impossible. It was impossible for the current Tae Ho to have defeated Balgad.

But Tae Ho had won. The one that had lost his life wasn't Tae Ho but the Giant of Earth.

Tae Ho let out a long sigh at Ragnar's question and then leaned his body on the wall. He grabbed Unnir from the things that were on the table next to the bed.

"I got some help."

Tae Ho started to take out the weapons from Unnir one by one and explained.

The moment he thought that it was over, the knights of Camelot had appeared to save him. The great knights of Camelot.

"Indeed, the knights of Camelot...."

When Ragnar finished listening to Tae Ho's explanation, he turned to look at the weapons of the knights with mixed emotions.

It was because he knew about the knights, and he'd even fought with some of them during the Great War.

Even after Erin was destroyed and Camelot had disappeared, their wills had remained.

That truth heated up Ragnar.

"It should be quite uncomfortable to carry all of those."

Ragnar spoke like a joke once again. It was to lighten up the heavy atmosphere, but after he said those words he realized that it would indeed become a problem.

Tae Ho already had a silly number of weapons. But it wasn't only one, but eleven weapons which had been added, so it would obviously become uncomfortable even if he had Unnir.

Tae Ho nodded.

He was planning on giving the magical bow of Tristan to Siri, but he would be using the remaining ones for himself.

“That’s why I don’t think I should be saving it anymore.”

“Save what?”

Tae Ho concentrated instead of answering anymore. He had used the empty slot for a saga he had saved until now.

The saga that was thought of quite a long time ago but wasn’t actually made.

‘Until now, Unnir had been enough.’

There was no way to waste it on a saga.

But the situation had changed. Because of that, Tae Ho manifested the saga he had saved until now without regrets.

[Saga: His Pocket is Connected to a Treasure Vault]

A window made of light appeared in front of Tae Ho. It was the common inventory window you could see in games and, obviously enough, in the Dark Age.

Tae Ho placed the weapons he took out from Unnir in the inventory.

Ragnar looked ridiculous while he gaped at the weapons disappearing in the air and then feigned a laugh.

“That’s not a saga. That’s a cheat!”

Ragnar spoke incredulously, and Tae Ho nodded.

< Episode 31 – Idun’s legion (3) > End

Episode 31/Chapter 4: Idun's legion (4)

The biggest difference between Unnir and the inventory saga was the number of actions needed when taking out an item.

One needed three motions to take out something from Unnir.

Firstly, they had to open the pocket. Secondly, they needed to think of or call out the item they wanted, and lastly, they then had to take out the item itself.

The last two weren't that bad, but the process of opening the pocket unexpectedly took a lot of time. Of course, it could be done in a mere second or two, but those seconds could determine one's life or death in battle.

In contrast to that, someone only needed two motions to retrieve an item from the inventory saga.

Simply think of the desired item and then take it out.

Then again, Tae Ho couldn't always maintain the saga, so he would have to activate it beforehand.

As a fix, he could just activate it before a fight.

'Does it have to develop a bit more for it to get predetermined keys?'

In Dark Age, it was possible to bind a key to each piece of equipment and change one's weapon and armor in an instant.

It seemed like it wasn't possible yet, but if it did become so, the utility of the weapons would increase severalfold as Tae Ho would be able to take out a suitable weapon for each situation.

'Just like Ragnar said, it's really a cheat. On top of that, the sentence of the Milesians will be added.'

Cuchulainn spoke as if it was absurd. He could merely listen to the stories of the weapons right now as he lacked in training, but if he developed it well, he would be able to handle the weapons freely

just like how the Knights of the Round Table could.

In addition, Tae Ho could activate it instantly and even if the comprehension of a weapon reached the peak, he still had the 'Warrior's Equipment'. Precisely speaking, the weapons belonging to the Dragon Knight, Kalsted.

'Won't you be able to control legendary weapons and fight like it's nothing?'

Thinking about it, it wasn't that it was impossible. He already had ten weapons that would appear in legends.

Cuchulainn spoke as if he was rather excited, and then Tae Ho turned back to the conversation with Ragnar once again.

It was because he still had some questions he wanted to ask.

"Master Ragnar, how is the situation in the residence? Nothing bad happened to Idun-nim, right?"

Ragnar was a warrior of Odin instead of Idun, but actually, it wouldn't be weird to say that he was a member of the residence.

Ragnar tilted his head at his question and answered.

"I didn't particularly get a call from Heda. Did something happen to Idun-nim?"

"Uh.....I can't feel Idun-nim well, even when I use 'Idun's Warrior'."

Tae Ho explained the situation in a bit more detail. He could feel the power of Idun when he fought against Balgad, but when he was escaping from the monsters, it became more difficult to sense her even more so than when he was in Midgard behind the Great Barrier.

"Well, she will be fine as Heda didn't contact us, right?"

As Tae Ho asked as if he wanted Ragnar to agree, the latter nodded slowly.

“....Right, there should be nothing wrong.”

He felt a bit uneasy as Ragnar didn't answer immediately, but it wasn't a negative answer either way, so Tae Ho decided to be at ease.

Ragnar spoke again.

“I thought you would be curious, so I will tell you that there isn't any abnormality in Midgard. They were a bit bewildered after you disappeared suddenly.”

It seemed like Rasgrid had held several ceremonies to ask the situation of Tae Ho's group.

Tae Ho thought of the deaths of the warriors of Valhalla in the battle against Balgad. They would all become Steel Warriors, but he couldn't help but feel a bit sad.

“Ah, right.”

Tae Ho organized his thoughts for a moment and then raised his head. As Ragnar asked if something was wrong, Tae Ho took out the fragment of Garmr's soul from Unnir instead of answering.

“I've got this.”

The fragment of Garmr's soul which he retrieved after defeating Korga.

He had forgotten about it as the battle against Balgad was really big, but looking at the entirety of Asgard, this was also an important thing.

“It becomes even more rewarding for me to have saved you.”

Ragnar smiled with a satisfied face and then extended his hand towards Tae Ho.

“Give it to me for now. I will pass it to the upper ranks.”

“Thank you.”

Because he would be handling all the tedious things.

Ragnar received the soul fragment from Tae Ho and then stood up.

“Good, we have put off the urgent fire for now so rest. You just have to return to the residence now.”

Tae Ho nodded and at the same time, a reply came from his stomach.

..rumble...

Tae Ho blinked at the honest sound, and Ragnar laughed and then pointed outside the room with his chin.

“Let’s go eat.”

He had starved for three days so to say.

Tae Ho hurriedly stood up.

—

“Oh! Tae Ho! Over here!”

A big restaurant appeared as Ragnar led Tae Ho into the unfamiliar hall. The place was almost empty since it wasn’t the usual mealtime, but Bracky, who was seated comfortably in a corner, yelled as soon as Tae Ho entered.

Tae Ho turned to look at him and then spotted Siri and Ingrid with him. It seemed like they were just about to eat, for there was a lot of steaming, hot food placed in the table.

As Tae Ho approached the group, Bracky hit next to his side and Siri moved a bit sideways to make a seat for Ragnar.

“Are you all fine?”

“Somewhat. Are you okay?”

“Somewhat too.”

Tae Ho answered Bracky’s question and then checked on Siri and Ingrid quickly with his ‘Eyes of the Dragon’. There didn’t seem to be any abnormalities on the two of them.

“What about Merlin?”

“He got called by the Valkyries. It seems like they want to discuss Erin’s gate and other things with him.”

Excluding Tae Ho, he was the only one that had witnessed everything from start to end. In addition, Merlin was a great magician that had the ability to interpret what had happened to the group, so there could unavoidably be many things to talk about.

“Warrior Tae Ho, I heard the general story from Merlin. I express respect to your performance.”

Ingrid spoke with her business-like face and then stood up from her seat and approached Tae Ho.

“May Njord’s blessing accompany you.”

She placed her lips on Tae Ho’s forehead and smiled. Tae Ho looked stiffly at Ingrid and then stood up and also placed his lips on her forehead.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

He had just received the blessings until now.

Tae Ho blessed with good intentions and smiled brightly, but Ingrid put on a dumbfounded face and just blinked. No, it wasn’t just dumbfounded but also quite surprised.

‘It seems like she disliked your blessing.’

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and said sharply. The flustered Tae Ho was taken aback and hesitantly threw a question.

“Uh, did I make a mistake?”

Asking like this could also be a mistake.

Ingrid blinked a few more times and then shook her head. She then put on a faint smile before responding.

“No, it’s because it was the first time I received a blessing from a

warrior. Thinking about it, it's been a long while since I was blessed by anyone."

Because it was rare for even the Valkyries to bless themselves.

As Ingrid answered with a soft face, Bracky stood up abruptly from his seat.

"Hmhm. Then I will also."

Bracky approached Ingrid naturally and she showed some reflexive movements. She took a big step back and then shrank her shoulders.

At the clear rejection, Bracky put on a depressed face and Ingrid then said while gulping dry saliva.

"Ah, it's nothing. I'm fine. I finished preparing my heart, so come whenever you want."

Hitting her chest was an attitude a warrior took in the battlefield.

Bracky dropped his shoulders at the more miserable feeling and Siri laughed. She stood up to lighten the atmosphere and then blessed Ingrid in her forehead.

"May Ullr's blessing accompany you."

"May Njord's blessing accompany you."

It was a really warm exchange of blessings.

Ragnar witnessed that from beginning to end and then feigned laughter and said, "So, are you done?"

Bracky said that he wasn't, but his voice just echoed in the air.

Siri laughed and then asked Ragnar,

"Do you also want a blessing teacher?"

"I'm fine, let's eat."

Ragnar really wanted his meal, and Siri smiled brightly and sat next to him. Ingrid blessed the depressed Bracky and continued to

eat.

And after some time—

After Tae Ho had tried each dish in the table-

“How is it, does the food suit your tastes?”

“Yes, it’s really del....”

Tae Ho answered reflexively but paused in the end. It was because he had heard a voice that shouldn’t be heard in this place.

“Freya-nim.”

The one that called out the owner of the voice was Ragnar. Everyone that was focusing on eating put on surprised faces and looked at the woman sitting next to Tae Ho, and the Goddess of Beauty answered Ragnar with graceful eyes.

“Hi Ragnar. It’s been a while. It’s nice to see that you are healthy.”

Freya’s smile was really fascinating. Even Siri, who was a girl, and Ragnar’s face got loosened for a moment. Bracky had a completely absent minded face.

Freya laughed at their reactions and looked at Tae Ho. She then frowned.

It wasn’t because Tae Ho showed an expression beyond being surprised.

“It makes me really competitive.”

Freya mumbled in a really low voice and then snorted and fixed her sitting posture.

“Well, it’s nice to see that all of you are healthy. It’s enough then.”

She spoke a bit uncomfortably, but even that was beautiful. Could it be said that she had a haughty charm?

Bracky just stared at Freya absent-mindedly, and Ragnar smiled

bitterly and took a deep gulp of some alcohol.

As Tae Ho, who was the only one that was fine, asked what was wrong, Freya snorted once again.

“Idun was worried about you. So i just came to check on you as I was just passing by.”

“Did something happen to Idun-nim?”

As he asked as he felt that something wasn't right, Freya frowned and then sighed.

“She collapsed out of exhaustion because she used too much of her strength. It's not that it was too much for her body to handle so don't worry too much.”

Tae Ho opened his eyes widely. For Idun to have collapsed. There was one one reason he could think of right now.

As Tae Ho's face changed, Freya twisted her eyebrows a bit and then said with sharp eyes.

“Treat her well when you return and don't always look for that Valkyrie. She's your one and only Goddess.”

Tae Ho couldn't answer anything easily at her words. It was because he felt a sudden remorse towards Idun.

Freya looked at the front instead of berrating him. It was because she felt Ragnar's gaze.

“Freya-nim, what did you mean.....”

“It was the biggest battle in a long time. I also have things to investigate about the gate of Erin.”

However it turned out, the gate was connected to a place outside of Midgard. They had just gotten outside, but they still couldn't overlook it.

“Do we have to retrieve it and install it anew at a later time? But there are a lot of problems, just like the Great Barrier.”

Freya mumbled by herself and then stood from her seat.

“Listen to the details in the conference. It seems like one great conference will be held tomorrow.”

“Thank you for telling us.”

As Ragnar answered while standing up, Siri and Ingrid also followed suit. Tae Ho did the same but Freya extended her hand and made him sit down again.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

Freya’s lips touched Tae Ho’s forehead, and a strong blessing that couldn’t be compared to those of the Valkyries covered Tae Ho’s body.

‘Is it regretful that it wasn’t elsewhere?’

Freya took her lips off from Tae Ho’s forehead and asked him in his mind, and Tae Ho again grew flustered and bewildered at the same time.

“Mm, I like you a bit now.”

Freya giggled and then blessed Ragnar.

And then, Bracky took a posture with a really excited face. It was just like looking at a kid before he received a present.

However Freya turned around coldly and then left.

“She’s like a storm whenever I see her.”

Ragnar spoke while Bracky was being pressed flat by the disappointment. Siri and Ingrid stood down as if they agreed and let out sighs.

“Anyways, if they open up a great conference.....it seems like you will get to your residence a bit later.”

“Yes? Why?”

Tae Ho wondered aloud at Ragnar’s words. It was because he wanted to return with haste, as he was worried about Idun.

Ragnar laughed as if Tae Ho's reaction was absurd and then pointed at Tae Ho with a gesture of his chin and said, "Why do think it is? You should participate in it too, commander of Idun's legion."

The Gods weren't the only ones that participated in conferences. Each commander of every legion also participated in it.

Not every commander participated, although at least the ones currently stationed in the base would undoubtedly show up.

"Warrior Tae Ho, if you are going to participate in a conference, you should contact your residence as soon as possible. The other commanders will all be accompanied by Valkyries."

Ingrid said hurriedly as if it was a really important thing. Asgard viewed the benefits to be more important than the formalities, but it wasn't that they didn't take them.

If Tae Ho went alone when all the other commanders got accompanied by Valkyries, it would obviously be unsightly, and it would also become a problem for the prestige of Idun's legion.

"I will contact them immediately."

Even if that wasn't the case, he was curious about the situation in the residence. In addition, there was no reason not to do it if he could meet Heda.

Tae Ho stood up intently.

—

Tae Ho contacted the residence between lunch and dinner.

As he had spent all the summoning rocks, he wrote a letter and sent it to the residence through Ingrid.

And a few hours later—

It was when the time to sleep was approaching.

"Adenmaha?"

Tae Ho asked with a surprised face and Adenmaha answered with a displeased face.

“Why? I’m not enough for you?”

It seemed like she was sharper than usual.

Tae Ho looked at Adenmaha with the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’ instead of speaking, and a new letterbox that couldn’t be seen before got added.

[Idun’s Valkyrie]

[Adenmaha]

“It’s true...and Heda?”

“She’s out as she had something urgent to take care of. It’s become really busy nowadays so she’s not always in the residence.....That’s also one of the reasons why we hurried on turning me into a Valkyrie.”

One wouldn’t know if Tae Ho was the only warrior like before, but there were now warriors that were staying in the residence. They needed a Valkyrie to look over the residence while Heda was out taking care of her business.

“There are no problems in the residence, right?”

“It’s fine. Rolo and McLaren recovered a lot.”

“I’m glad.”

Tae Ho let out a sigh of relief and then checked the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’ saga. It was because he thought of something.

‘Indeed.’

The name of Adenmaha was added on the registered Valkyries.

He hadn’t received a blessing from her yet, but the completion was similar to Reginleif perhaps because their connection was deep.

“Did I get added too?”

Tae Ho nodded at the question of the quick-witted Adenmaha, and it was after that-Tae Ho opened his eyes widely and put a surprised face that shocked Adenmaha.

It was because Adenmaha wasn't the only one that got added to the list.

[Valkyrie Lord]

[Freya]

The chief of the Valkyries and the Goddess of Magic and Beauty.

Tae Ho looked at his surroundings for a moment and activated his saga.

< Episode 31 – Idun's legion (4) > End

Episode 31/Chapter 5: Idun's legion (5)

Each person had their own preferences, but there was always something universal.

When taking that into account, the most beautiful woman in Asgard was Freya no matter what anyone said.

In the first place, she was literally the Goddess of Beauty.

It would be weirder if there was someone more beautiful than her.

Tae Ho thought that Heda was much prettier than Freya because of the power of the bean chaff –of course, Heda was also an outstanding beauty among Valkyries– but he didn't deny the fact that Freya was also really beautiful.

Because of that, Tae Ho could feel that he was more nervous than usual. It was different to when he called out Reginleif or Ingrid.

“Why are you checking the surroundings?”

Adenmaha opened her eyes sharply and asked.

Tae Ho cleared his throat at her eyes and then concentrated on his saga.

Because the thing that appeared would be a fake anyways. There was no need to be nervous.

[Saga: The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

As soon as Tae Ho activated his saga, a small magic circle appeared in front of him and then a beautiful woman appeared along with some light.

She was, of course, the Goddess of Magic and Beauty, Freya.

However, Tae Ho put a vague expression and Adenmaha let out a sigh of relief.

The fake Freya had been summoned, but her condition wasn't

good.

First, the transparency was too high. It wouldn't be excessive to say that she was half transparent.

In addition, she just stayed still like a wooden doll and didn't even move.

"Mm, I think that it's not easy to summon a Goddess."

In the case of the Valkyries, Tae Ho was able to summon a perfect fake after meeting once and receiving two blessings.

"I'm also a Goddess."

Adenmaha pouted her lips and mumbled, but it was unavoidable. If one followed that train of thought, all the Valkyries were Goddesses.

'The difference in their statuses is too big, but it seems like there is also a good point to learn from. If you are able to summon her properly, it seems like she will show a completely different strength from the Valkyries.'

Cuchulainn laughed as if it was funny while speaking.

The fake Valkyries that were summoned became quite influenced by the backgrounds and personalities of their real counterparts.

It wasn't that noticeable when he'd first used it as the completion rate was too low, but for the ones whose completion rates were becoming quite high, their uniqueness was showing up.

In the case of the fake Reginleif, she had the best physical abilities among the ones Tae Ho could summon. Rasgrid was powerful in magic, and Ingrid was skilled in defense.

'But of course, the most superior is Heda.'

For starters, her completion rate was the highest to the point where she couldn't even be compared with the other Valkyries.

"Summon me too."

Adenmaha, who was checking out the fake Freya, said as if urging him. Tae Ho was also curious about the completion rate of Adenmaha, so he released the fake Freya and activated his saga once again.

“Ho.”

A fake Adenmaha appeared on the place the fake Freya was standing on. In the first place, as Adenmaha had quite a deep connection with Tae Ho, the completion rate was quite high even though it was her first time being summoned.

“Hm, so I am like this in your eyes right?”

Adenmaha examined her fake self as if looking at a mirror and then crossed her arms and spoke. Tae Ho also smiled and asked as she looked to be having fun.

“Do you like it?”

“It’s not enough.”

Adenmaha spoke harshly and shook her head a few times before approaching Tae Ho.

“So that completion rate increases as the number of meetings and blessings does, right?”

“Somewhat.”

Just like the fake Adenmaha proved that the deep connections and interactions were also important, the most crucial things were the meetings and blessings.

“Hm. Well, it’s unavoidable then.”

Adenmaha glanced at a distant place and then cleared her throat a few times.

It seemed like she was requesting something, but as Tae Ho looked at her as if asking why she was postured so, she frowned.

“What did I expect?”

Adenmaha grumbled in a low voice and then approached Tae Ho a bit more and stood on her toes, but it was pointless.

The more the synchro rate increased with Kalsted, both Tae Ho's face and physique were becoming more similar to his. When he first entered Valhalla, he was 180cm tall, but he was now 187cm.

In the case of Heda, she could barely reach Tae Ho's cheek to give him a blessing after she stood on her toes, but it didn't work for Adenmaha.

Her height was 161cm when he checked with the 'Eyes of the Dragon'.

Adenmaha lived without thinking that she was particularly small among the Tuatha De Danann, but she changed her thoughts in Asgard. Everyone was just too tall.

The average height for the warriors of Valhalla was 190cm, and the Valkyries were all slim and tall and at least 170cm.

'Now that I see, all the members in the residence are tall.'

The female members excluding Adenmaha; so to say Heda, Siri and Scathach were at least 170cm tall, and Tae Ho and Ragnar were well past 180cm.

Ingrid and Bracky, who hung out with them frequently, were also tall. Bracky was a giant even among the warriors of Valhalla at more than 2m tall, and Ingrid was more than 170cm.

Whatever the case, the important thing was that there was a difference of 30cm between Tae Ho and Adenmaha, and even if she stood on her toes, she wasn't able to bless Tae Ho if he didn't lower himself.

"Ah, sit down a bit!"

Adenmaha got angry while struggling to be on her toes and then hit Tae Ho's arm.

It would have been good if he lowered his posture by himself, but

he just stood there stupidly.

Tae Ho bit his lips at the rebuke of Adenmaha. It was because he felt like he would burst out of laughter.

“Here, done?”

As Tae Ho sat down on the bed and shrugged his shoulders, Adenmaha pouted once more and then blessed Tae Ho’s forehead and both cheeks.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

‘It seems like she really wanted to bless you.’

To see that she blessed him two more times in quick succession.

Cuchulainn was the casanova of Erin, and he laughed as if Adenmaha was too cute. It was different for Tae Ho, however. It was because he hadn’t imagined that she would bless his forehead and both cheeks.

As Tae Ho looked at her with surprised eyes, Adenmaha snorted like she always did and said, “It will fight better the higher the completion rate is. It’s bothersome to go look for another master....well, something like that?”

Adenmaha turned around at the last sentence and Cuchulainn burst out of laughter at that and Tae Ho smiled in a good mood.

It was because Adenmaha worrying about him was commendable and thankful.

‘How spoiled.’

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue when Adenmaha turned around once again.

“Now that I see, I heard that you will be participating in an important conference tomorrow. Did you prepare everything?”

“Uh....somewhat? It’s not that i’m going to give a presentation.”

Ragnar and Merlin had already reported how he had defeated the

Giant of Earth, Balgad.

In addition, the main subject for this conference would be on the results of the battle and the movement of the giants.

Because of that, Tae Ho just had to listen attentively and not speak.

But Adenmaha let out a sigh as if it was absurd and then spoke with sharp eyes.

“Your clothes and things like that. Are you planning to participate like that?”

“Uh....is there a problem? Master Ragnar didn't tell me anything.”

Tae Ho looked at himself and said. He was wearing the Hawk Wing coat on top of his armor like usual.

“Haa, really. What would you have done if I hadn't come?”

Adenmaha mumbled and shook her head a few times and then said with a stiff voice.

“I heard that it's a place where you get accompanied by a Valkyrie of your legion and boast how great you are so you obviously have to dress well.”

It didn't seem like one should mind their attire that much as it was a conference being held in a fortress, but still, it was a conference that existences above the commander rank participated in. There was a high probability for it to be formal.

‘Well, it's not really in the front lines. I think she's right.’

Tae Ho was at a loss for words as Cuchulainn agreed with her.

Actually, it was obvious for Tae Ho not to think about how he would dress.

The only thing he wore was the team uniform.

When Tae Ho nodded absentmindedly, Adenmaha placed the big

bag she had brought with her on top of the bed. It was a trunk-like bag meant for travelling, but as she opened it, Tae Ho could see cool clothes and a black cape with golden lines.

“Adenmaha?”

“It’s the uniform for the commander of Idun’s legion. One that you use on ceremonies and special occasions.”

Tae Ho could see the symbol of Idun that was engraved in several places of the clothes.

Tae Ho looked at the uniform with an admiring expression, and Adenmaha smacked her lips as if she was hesitating about something and then opened her mouth with a sigh.

“Heda started to make it a few days ago before you became a commander. I also helped a little. Like that decoration on the shoulder.”

Adenmaha spoke as if she were proud of herself.

Tae Ho nodded a few times in affirmation and then checked his uniform once again. He could feel the care and effort Heda had made in the needle work in the crest of Idun.

“Thank you.”

Tae Ho caressed the uniform and said in a low voice. Adenmaha let out a sigh again and opened her shoulders.

“Anyways, I will sleep in Siri’s room, so you should know that. You should go to sleep early.”

“Right, have a nice sleep.”

Because it was already late.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

Adenmaha added another blessing on Tae Ho’s forehead, and Tae Ho also returned it to her.

—

The next morning, Adenmaha inflated her cheeks with a displeased face.

“Why are you laughing?”

“It suits you well.”

“How cute. She looks like a baby Valkyrie.”

The first voice was Tae Ho’s, and the second one belonged to Bracky.

Adenmaha was wearing the uniform of a Valkyrie instead of the white dress she usually wore.

An armor that covered her shoulders and chest and a white dress that secured the mobility of her two legs.

In addition to this, she was wearing a headband with the wing decoration characteristic of Valkyries and a sword at her waist. She was also carrying a round shield that seemed to be too big for her.

As Adenmaha didn’t have any relation with the armor, sword, shield, or other pieces of gear and was even smaller than the average Valkyrie, there was, unavoidably, an awkward vibe coming from her.

As Bracky kept laughing, Adenmaha kicked Bracky’s shin as if she couldn’t endure it anymore; however, Bracky was someone that could even endure a giant’s attack. He just chuckled as if it didn’t even tickle.

Adenmaha turned to look at Tae Ho as if telling him to take revenge for her, but it seemed like he didn’t plan to do that at all.

Fortunately enough, it wasn’t that there was no one that sided with Adenmaha.

Siri pinched Bracky’s side to make him stop and then spoke to Tae Ho.

“Have a safe trip, Tae Ho. Don’t get nervous over nothing. Adenmaha, it also suits you really well, so don’t worry too much.”

“We will return soon.”

Tae Ho and Adenmaha said their farewell to Siri and Bracky and then moved to the conference room with a Valkyrie that had come for them.

If they were with Ragnar, they would have been more relaxed, but unfortunately enough, he was a warrior of Odin’s, not Idun’s.

He also couldn’t go to the conference with Tae Ho as he’d participate in it alongside other warriors of Odin’s legion.

‘Don’t tremble. It’s nothing much. In the first place, aren’t the people you meet more special?’

Cuchulainn and Ragnar were warriors that could represent a world.

In addition, Tae Ho had also met Freya and Thor a few times.

Just like Cuchulainn had said, Tae Ho grew more resolute and then followed the Valkyrie with a more comfortable heart.

And after some time-

“If you go inside, you will see a place for Idun’s legion.”

The Valkyrie that finished her role expressed etiquette towards Tae Ho in front of the door. Tae Ho also hit his chest twice and answered her.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

As Adenmaha hit her chest sloppily, the Valkyrie put on a smile and turned around.

“It doesn’t seem to be a place here but a separate room.”

There were several rooms connected in the hall that drew a circle. Tae Ho thought of an opera house he’d once seen in a movie. The VIP room was separated from the normal spectators, and it

seemed to be similar in this instance as well.

Tae Ho took a breath and opened the door of the room. The structure he had expected appeared in front of him.

A wide, thick table stood in the middle of the room, and the seats of the commanders surrounded it.

One difference this room had with an opera house was the height of the seats. It seemed like they were so large because they were meant to seat Gods.

Adenmaha entered the small room and gulped dry saliva and grew pale. It was because of the heavy atmosphere that pressed down on the conference room.

The strong auras of the commanders emanated naturally as if they were breathing.

The divine power each representing Valkyrie held also mixed into the air.

When those things gathered and were mixed in one spot, it created a volatile environment.

Tae Ho shared the power of Idun to Adenmaha and looked towards the seats. He could see Freya covering her face with a veil and Thor that was laughing like always.

And one more personA warrior was next to those two people.

Tae Ho looked at him for the first time, but he knew who he was the moment he saw him.

The pinnacle of the warriors of Valhalla.

The strongest warrior that had even far surpassed Ragnar Lodbrok.

[Top-ranked warrior]

[Sigurd]

His eyes moved towards Tae Ho.

< Episode 31 – Idun’s legion (5) > End

Episode 31/Chapter 6: Idun's legion (6)

Sigurd's hair was golden.

The really soft and long hair that flowed down his shoulders and back seemed like a flowing river of gold.

But rather than beautiful, it gave off a strong impression like fire or the sun.

Sigurd's face was upright like a sculpture made from a rock. He didn't have an expression and displayed a rock-hard discipline through the strong magic power within his red eyes.

Tae Ho swallowed dryly. The moment he faced Sigurd's eyes, he felt like static flowed all over his body.

‘Sigurd.’

Tae Ho knew about him. Precisely speaking, it was more correct to say that he had investigated him.

Who is the strongest warrior in Valhalla?

Who's the ranking number one? What sagas does he have?

It was a natural curiousness. It was an old habit of Tae Ho to perform research on the top player of any game he started and what his record was like.

‘A protagonist from a legend.’

Sigurd was a successor of the Volsungr family that has inherited the blood of Odin.

So obviously enough, the blood of Odin also flowed in his veins. That and a lot more. More than anyone else in the Volsungr family.

He was already close to a demigod since he was born. He would surely become a great warrior even if he didn't receive any training.

But Sigurd also received proper training. The one that had trained him was the father of sheeps, dwarf Regin.

Regin was an outstanding blacksmith that had no competitors. Because of that, Sigurd naturally learnt blacksmithing skills from him and that made him into an even stronger warrior.

Sigurd wasn't merely a warrior that knew how to swing some weapon well. He could listen to the voices of his weapons just like the warriors of Erin could. In addition, he could perfectly understand the weapons of his enemies just by seeing them once.

When Sigurd grew up and developed completely, there was no one in Midgard that could beat him in a duel.

It wasn't excessive to say that he had already climbed to the seat of the strongest warrior.

But Sigurd's story didn't end there.

He was also a strong magician.

Dwarf Regin had transmitted to Sigurd all the magic and visions he knew excluding the most important ones.

His talent in magic was completely overwhelming, even more so than his talent as a warrior.

Because he had the blood of Odin, the King of Gods, flowing in his veins.

The strongest warrior in Midgard and at the same time a magician.

Dwarf Regin really treasured Sigurd. He had even said that Sigurd was the best magical sword he had made.

The reason Regin trained Sigurd to this point wasn't because of his love for his sheeps nor because Sigurd's talent was so beautiful that he couldn't leave him alone.

Regin had raised up Sigurd as his magical sword. The stories that were heard weren't comparisons or jokes.

It was all to remove his old enemy, the devil dragon, Fafnir.

The Dragon Slaughterer.

That was the nickname of Sigurd.

Sigurd had defeated Fafnir just like Regin had wished.

He didn't stop there and promptly defeated ten more dragons.

The battle against the dragons made Sigurd stronger. The blood of the dragons that he bathed in made his body strong like steel and the heart and flesh of the dragon he ate granted him mystical powers.

All of this had happened before he'd even entered Valhalla, when he was in his youth.

[Dragon Slaughterer]

Tae Ho breathed slowly. He could feel his saga even if he didn't see with the 'Eyes of the Dragon'.

He was a dragon's death incarnate. A specialized magical sword to bring down the legendary flying beasts.

The reason Adenmaha found the atmosphere to be harsh wasn't only because of the air in the room. Sigurd's existence itself made her, a dragon race, feel nervous. That was the Dragon Slaughterer that made any dragon ilk feel choked just with his presence.

Kalsted also had the blood of a dragon flowing in him, and because of that, Sigurd was a opposite existence for him.

'Don't cower. Just from looking at the bases, you are much more of a monster.'

Cuchulainn said matter of factly.

He already knew as much about his saga and Kalsted as Ragnar.

Ragnar had spoken, and Cuchulainn had agreed.

As it were right now, though, Sigurd's presence was entirely domineering. He wouldn't be able to become an opponent for

Sigurd even if he fought with all his strength.

However, that was only in the present.

[Synchro rate: 59%]

Tae Ho slowly released his strength. He protected Adenmaha, who seemed to be in pain just from being watched by Sigurd. He grabbed on her waist as it seemed like she would fall at any moment.

A conspicuous color appeared in Sigurd's eyes which stared at Tae Ho and Adenmaha expressionlessly.

Tae Ho didn't dodge his eyes and faced them directly.

The one that turned his eyes away was Sigurd. He just slightly averted his eyes instead of trying to press down Tae Ho and Adenmaha by releasing all of his strength. They couldn't know what he was thinking about because he didn't have an expression, but at least it didn't seem like he had any enmity with them.

'It seems like he's on guard as she's the race of a dragon.'

Cuchulainn mumbled.

For Adenmaha, it was something she could get enraged at, but this place was Asgard, and in Asgard it was common sense for Sigurd to be aware of a dragon.

No sane dragons existed in Asgard, to say nothing of the ice and fire dragons that resided in Jotunheim and Muspelheim, respectively.

All the named dragons living on the roots of Yggdrasil like Nidhogg were evil.

'There were also few good dragons in Erin.'

Excluding Adenmaha, who was of a dragon race and a Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann, one could say that there was almost none.

In Sigurd's position, who'd fought against dragons all his life, he

could only stand on guard as a warrior that had the blood of a dragon flowing in him appeared with a Valkyrie of a dragon race. No, it was more impressive that all he had done was stare.

‘I heard that there are many good dragons in the Temple, and I even saw one directly in the Great War.’

If Asgard was of the northern European mythology and Olympus was the myth of Greece and Rome, then the temple belonged to the mythology of the East.

He had only heard things from Ragnar, but it seemed like maidens flew instead of Valkyries, and it seemed to be a world where immortals and soldiers formed a strong army.

Tae Ho listened to Cuchulainn’s easy-going explanation and turned to look at Adenmaha.

“Adenmaha, are you okay?”

“I’m fine.”

Adenmaha panted and barely managed to answer. Looking at Adenmaha, Tae Ho naturally felt hostility towards Sigurd.

However, Adenmaha grabbed his arm. Sigurd hadn’t done anything evil and wasn’t someone that enjoyed bothering Adenmaha.

“It’s fine.”

Adenmaha reiterated her position, and Tae Ho nodded. He breathed in to calm himself down and looked at the front.

He could feel the several gazes he had missed as he was concentrating on Sigurd.

They were the gazes of the commanders.

The commanders were all putting on interested faces at the short clash of powers between Sigurd and Tae Ho.

Only superior-ranked warriors or above could become a

commander of a legion. They had read several things from that short clash of powers.

“Let’s start.”

The voice received a flood of gazes. It was the voice of Thor.

He lightly hit the platform with Mjolnir and glanced at Freya, and she shrugged her shoulders and took off her veil. With that, all minor conversations ended.

Everyone in the conference room turned to look at Freya. She got satisfied at the atmosphere of the room that had turned silent and giggled and then put on the veil again.

“Then, we will be starting with the great conference.”

The Valkyrie that was standing below the platform where Thor, Freya, and Sigurd were at raised her voice and then all the commanders and Valkyries sat on their seats.

After that, the story proceeded quite quickly.

Just like Ragnar had said, this battle was the biggest they had faced in tens of years, but it was pointless to say more than that.

It felt like the two sides had suffered losses they could still handle.

Obviously enough, the giants had suffered more than them.

They had lost Balgad, the Giant of Earth. As Balgad wasn’t a giant that stood on the front lines, there wasn’t an immediate loss, but it would surely become a problem in Jotunheim.

In addition, it was impossible even for the Magician King, Utgard Loki, to raise someone to the level of Balgad.

The next thing that was mentioned was the gate of Erin.

First, Freya had said that it was impossible to use it again now that it had been used once. She honestly recognized the flaw in the Great Barrier by mentioning the battle against the fomiores that

had also occurred recently.

“It’s to the point that we have to remove it install it again, even by taking some risks. I will send you the results of this after we decide it later.”

After this, the reports of the several commanders took place. Tae Ho had also participated with the right of a commander, but as he wasn’t taking part in the front lines, he had nothing to report. As he was just listening, the conference soon ended.

“Good. We will now honor the heroes in this battle.”

As Thor said enjoyingly, the commanders also revealed jovial expressions. Freya smirked at their expressions and said with the purest voice,

“Idun’s commander. Come to the front.”

The moment Freya stopped talking, the wall that was next to the place Adenmaha and Tae Ho were sitting on disappeared, and some stairs appeared.

As Adenmaha and Tae Ho already knew that there would be a reward at the end of the conference, they could walk down the stairs rather naturally even though they were a bit nervous.

The Valkyrie that was below the platform conceded her seat to the both of them and then stepped back.

Adenmaha let out a long breath and Tae Ho tried to put on a calm expression for her sake.

Freya laughed at the two of them once again and then rolled her fingers to activate some magic.

“Kyak?”

Adenmaha let out a stifled scream. It was because the floor had started to move. The platform that Thor, Freya, and Sigurd were seated at and the platform Tae Ho and Adenmaha were standing on began to spin. It didn’t end there, and the wall that was behind

Thor disappeared like a lie.

Fresh air and wind entered in an instant. Adenmaha opened her eyes widely unconsciously and dropped her mouth.

There were warriors of Valhalla on the wide platform that you would have to look up at. If one also counted the Steel Warriors, it seemed like there would be tens of thousands.

‘What a grand sight.’

Cuchulainn spoke, enjoying the moment. Adenmaha grew astonished at the unexpected meeting with the great army and then started to act excitedly.

Thor laughed and spoke with a voice that shook the ground and sky like thunder.

“Warriors, I remember the Great War.”

The terrible war that occurred a hundred years ago.

Asgard had lost too many things in that war.

“Idun’s legion was decimated to the point where they couldn’t act as a legion anymore. Because of that, it has remained inoperable for the past hundred years.”

But it was different now. The destroyed legion has started to recover again.

“I welcome the legion that has returned. I compliment the commander of Idun that has raised great merits.”

Thor spoke about Tae Ho’s performance.

He defeated Bress, the King of the Fomoirs and destroyed Balgad, the Giant of Earth.

The hero of Valhalla that has retrieved several fragments of Garmr’s soul.

Thor stood from his seat and hit his chest with the fist that was holding Mjolnir and the sound of thunder was heard at the same

time so that everyone could hear it.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms! For the Goddess of Youth and Life, Idun!”

Thor raised Mjolnir high and then the warriors of Valhalla answered. The tens of thousands of warriors hit their chests at the same time.

“For Idun!”

“For Idun!”

The voice that became one shook the sky and the earth. The commanders also expressed etiquette and called out the name of Idun.

Adenmaha turned to look at Tae Ho with an excited face. Tae Ho also felt his chest get heated up at the amazing cheer.

Could Idun be hearing it right now?

He thought of Idun’s smiling face. He felt like he could listen to her voice that was like an excited bird chirping.

“For Idun.”

Tae Ho said in a low voice and hit his chest twice and then the warriors yelled once again.

“For Idun! For the Goddess of Life!”

The Goddess of Life and Youth.

Tae Ho’s Goddess.

He wanted to meet Idun as much as Heda right now.

—

Idun was standing on the green plains.

She’d heard the voices of the warriors of Valhalla that were calling out her name, and she’d cried and laughed.

It wasn’t on the plains where she’d met Tae Ho. It was a place

hidden beyond the big apple tree and somewhere Tae Ho had never visited before.

There was a big tombstone in front of Idun. Idun wiped off the tear that flowed down her cheek and touched the tombstone.

There were names of warriors engraved in it.

The warriors of Idun that lost their lives in the Great War.

Not a single name was omitted, from the lowest-ranked to the superior-ranked warriors. There were also the names of Valkyries on it.

Idun remembered all of their names. She hadn't been able to forget even though a century had passed.

Wind blew and Idun took a breath. She looked at the names that were at the highest place of the tombstone.

Idun, the Goddess of Life and Youth.

Bragi, the God of Poetry and Music.

The two Gods that lost their lives in the Great War.

The mother and father they couldn't meet anymore.

Idun, or more appropriately, the current Idun, held back her tears. She then put on a smile forcefully.

Idun's legion was reconstructed.

The new commander led the legion.

"My warrior, Tae Ho."

The present Idun leaned her cheek on the tombstone and then boasted about Tae Ho towards the previous Idun, the deceased warriors of Idun, and her father.

< Episode 31 – Idun's legion (6) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 1: The land of darkness

(1)

Balgad, the Giant of Earth, died.

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, buried his body within the wooden throne and closed his eyes.

It was an unexpected loss. There were now only three of the Five Fingers remaining.

The Magician King didn't want to blame Avalt. The one that had granted them a right to act freely was him and they didn't have death planned.

An accident.

The incident was one only expressed like that.

The Magician King thought of the Great War. Asgard wasn't the only side that hadn't completely recovered since then.

The Five Fingers had been weakened. The present Five Fingers weren't comparable to the ones in the Great War.

The Magician King gritted his teeth. It was because the old wound in his shoulder had started to hurt.

The Prince of Light, Cuchulainn.

The warrior of Erin that had defeated the strongest giant of the previous Five Fingers, the Giant of Cold, Urtr, and had even dealt Utgard Loki a near-fatal wound.

The magician king pressed on the wound with his big hand and the pain was transmitted on his skin that looked like a split wall.

The Great War.

The Magician King smiled bitterly. He didn't look at the past but at the present.

The Five Fingers weren't weak. They were strong among the present giants.

It wasn't easy to imagine that the Giant of Earth, Balgad, was defeated by a warrior that had just become superior-ranked.

Idun's warrior.

He had already heard his name several times.

The one that had defeated the sinner, Sigil, and killed Bress the Tyrant was that warrior.

The Magician King understood the Five Fingers. He could also understand why Avalt and Balgad were so obsessed with Idun's warrior.

He'd been contacted by the Frost Giant King, Harmarti. He received the results from when Asgard clashed against the army of giants to rescue Idun's warrior.

The things that happened in Midgard—

The reaction of Asgard—

The measures Freya took—

And the most important thing of all, the movement of the King of Gods, Odin.

The Magician King sped up his thoughts. Contrary to his brilliant mind, he opened his eyes slowly and looked out before him.

He moved the small picture of Idun's warrior to a broader one and looked at the completed image.

The time had come.

It was already ripe.

The Magician King rolled his fingers and transmitted his will through the magical nets that looked like a spider web.

—

The God of Lies, Loki, raised his head.

He was in a noisy bar.

It was still the middle of the day, but warriors were already gathered and drinking. The traveller that came from the North started to tell stories about the warriors of Valhalla, and the warriors' eyes shone like those of kids as they listened to his story.

Even the waitresses that had no connection to the battlefield leaned their ears towards the traveller.

And that was a really obvious thing.

Because the stories of the warriors of Valhalla were manifested myths on the ground.

The traveller also spoke about Idun's warrior. Based on the words of Idun's warrior, the residence of Idun was filled with the most beautiful Valkyries in Valhalla and he rode on a golden ship and even had strong and cool Shinsoos.

In addition, he had also said that the great Viking King, Ragnar, also resided in that place.

Just being able to meet him was glorious enough, but it seemed that one would be able to receive classes from him if you went to Idun's legion.

"Idun's warrior said that the representative Valkyrie of Idun's legion is so extraordinarily beautiful that her beauty is the best in Asgard and in all the Nine Realms. Not only that, but she also cooks so well that you may die after eating it."

"Ohh."

"Ohh Valhalla!"

Loki tilted his head slightly. Because there was only one Valkyrie in Idun's legion.

Heda.

Loki also knew her. Although it wasn't as that traveller claimed, she was certainly a beauty in any part of Asgard.

The traveller kept telling many other things.

Especially, the most popular of them was the story of the monster Bracky of the Skald Knights. His story of having died and having returned in a few months after becoming a warrior of Valhalla made the hearts of the warriors burn.

“Valhalla!”

“Valhalla!”

The warriors desired Valhalla more than usual and they pondered about the life after death rather than the current life.

Loki smiled bitterly. He thought of Odin's face that would be frowning by looking at this situation. He created wars with his magic to replenish Valhalla with new warriors, but he wouldn't like this situation where everyone desired death.

Loki drank the beer in his cup. No one in the bar noticed that they were in the presence of a God.

Loki closed his eyes. It wasn't to savor the cheap beer.

He could hear the voice of the Magician King. It was really weak, as it had passed a long way and was sent from beyond the Great Barrier. The contents of it were also short.

But it was enough. Loki placed down his cup and again smiled bitterly.

“Let everything happen as the King wishes.”

Loki mumbled and stood up. He then left the land that the Giant of Earth, Balgad, had prepared many things and moved to another place.

Now, the time wasn't really too long.

—

“Amazing!”

Adenmaha yelled brightly as soon as the conference ended and returned to the residence.

Actually, she was already beyond elated while coming to the residence .

Tae Ho understood Adenmaha, and he was actually also really excited.

‘Standing in front of tens of thousands of people is always thrilling.’

Cuchulainn said, and Tae Ho agreed. It was what he felt in a final.

Tens of people would concentrate in him. They would react sensitively at each one of the motions of his hand or eyes.

It was a moment where one could imagine that they had become a God.

And that feeling would get bigger the more people were lined up in front of you.

Adenmaha was a Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann, but she didn’t possess that much power. In addition, the word ‘Goddess’ for the Tuatha De Danann, that was solely composed of Gods, was no different to differentiating a woman.

Because of that, Adenmaha had no experience of being worshipped by someone, and the same went for being cheered in front of tens of thousands of people.

“Ahh, so you play being God because of this.”

It seemed like it was a wrong appreciation, but Tae Ho just laughed at it as Adenmaha also wasn’t being serious with her words.

“It must have also influenced you ever since you became a Valkyrie of Idun’s legion. You are an existence belonging to Idun

now, so you will obviously get heated up when they call out Idun's name."

Ragnar, who had returned earlier than Tae Ho's group, said as much.

Tae Ho looked at him, wondering when he had arrived, and Ragnar opened his mouth again.

"If you are going to return to the residence, you should do it quickly. It's not just one or two commanders that want to have a drink with you, so if you get caught, you will be held for at least a month."

The humans of Midgard weren't the only ones that showed an interest to Idun's warrior. Idun's warrior was also the main talk among the warriors of Valhalla.

'A feast with warriors of Valhalla was always painful.'

Cuchulainn mumbled in a low voice as if he had remembered something terrible.

Because when the warriors of Valhalla started to party, they would follow that path until the end.

Tae Ho remembered the banquets he had been until now and shook his head unconsciously. He then turned around and thought of another thing.

'I also want to see her.'

If he closed his eyes he felt like he could see Heda's and Idun's faces. He wanted to meet the two of them the fastest he could.

"It's obvious what you are thinking about."

Ragnar clicked his tongue and shook his head. Tae Ho grew embarrassed and then cleared his throat a few times and asked, "What are you planning to do, teacher?"

"I'm planning on staying a few more days before returning. I have some things to take care of."

Although he was retired now, he was someone that had once climbed to the top-ranked seat. His influence couldn't be ignored at all. In addition, Valhalla always needed his vast knowledge and strategies.

“Most of all-”

Ragnar swapped the subject and looked at Tae Ho. He put on the eyes of a master testing his disciple and asked, “I’m curious about your thoughts of having met him directly. How did you see Sigurd?”

The top-ranked warrior, Sigurd.

The strongest warrior in Valhalla, something no one could deny.

He was strong. So strong that the current Tae Ho couldn't even begin to be compared with him.

Did he only feel that he had faced a wall? Or fell in shock that there was another sky beyond the sky?

Ragnar was expectant of the answer Tae Ho would give, and it was the same for Cuchulainn.

Tae Ho opened his mouth slowly. It was an honest thought he didn't decorate at all.

And that answer satisfied Ragnar and Cuchulainn.

—

The day Tae Ho left the fortress in the front lines was the day after the grand conference took place.

Bracky and Siri, who had suffered along with Tae Ho, received a momentary vacation. In addition, Siri was called especially by Ullr to rest in his residence instead of Idun's residence or in Midgard.

Because of that, when they arrived at Valhalla, Siri went to Ullr's residence along with Gandur that had come for her. Bracky was also received by a Valkyrie of Thor's legion so he immediately rode off on their ship.

“She didn’t come to greet me.”

As Tae Ho looked at the dock with disappointed eyes, Adenmaha swelled her cheeks.

“You have me. I’m here.”

He was already being accompanied by a Valkyrie, so there was no need for another one to come. In addition, there was one more reason this time.

“That’s a cool ship.”

Merlin smiled and said. The thing that was in front of Tae Ho’s group wasn’t the wooden boat. It was a huge ship that was adorned in gold.

It was one of the several rewards he had received this time for his actions.

Tae Ho looked at the big, white sail that had the symbol of Idun with a proud face. He felt like he could understand the expression ‘to feel full just by looking at others eat’.

As it was a magical boat like the flying pirate ship and Scuabtuinne, it didn’t particularly need anyone to control it. With that in mind, Tae Ho, Adenmaha, and Merlin could view the insides of the ship while going to the residence.

“It’s big and beautiful.”

Tae Ho said with a satisfied expression after checking out the spacious cabins, storage, etc. Adenmaha put on a satisfied expression when she saw a symbol of a white sea serpent that was on the deck.

And after some more time—

The three of them stood on the deck and looked at the direction of Idun’s residence. As it was the first time for Merlin, he showed an excited look like that of a traveller finally visiting a famous landmark.

“Most of all, are you prepared to cope with it?”

“Cope with it?”

“You bluffed big time.”

Adenmaha started to say the things the newcomer warriors said they heard in Midgard as if it was absurd. She had said something similar in Midgard, but the situation was different now.

Firstly, a few days had passed since new warriors entered the legion, and it was plenty of time for them to realize the truth of the legion.

“What did they say?”

“They didn’t say anything but, ‘let’s wait until the commander comes’~ something like that?”

Adenmaha frowned and said. As Heda wasn’t currently on the residence, Adenmaha had been the one that was taking care of the new warriors.

“I can feel their doubtful gazes at times and.....ugh, I felt like my liver was aching.”

Because there was a difference that couldn’t be filled from what Tae Ho had said and the actual residence of Idun.

Tae Ho frowned.

“Hm. It’s somewhat unfair. I have never lied....Why is your expression like that?”

“It hurts. Hurrts.”

Adenmaha got her cheeks pinched strongly and then stepped back while putting on a teary face. While she covered her cheeks with her hands because she was afraid she may get pinched again, Tae Ho found her to be both cute and poor at the same time.

As a result, Tae Ho opened his shoulders broadly and said, “The flying ship is what I showed them in Midgard, and we also have

this cool ship, right?”

‘So you are saying you didn’t have it when you spoke about it.’

Cuchulainn spoke with a lukewarm voice, but he ignored it.

Adenmaha said while still covering her cheeks,

“What about the Valkyries?”

The new warriors had heard that there were more than ten.

“That’s no problem either.”

Tae Ho spoke and then looked at a distant place. It seemed like he should start by now as they were getting closer to the residence.

[Saga: The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

[Saga: Warrior’s Equipment]

[Saga: His Pocket is Connected to a Treasure Vault]

Tae Ho activated his sagas in rapid consecution and a squad of fake Valkyries appeared behind Tae Ho with Heda at the front.

Rasgrid, Reginleif, Ingrid, Gandur, Kaldea, and Adenmaha. A total of seven.

Excluding the fake Heda, all the other ones were just standing dumbfoundedly, but it was enough.

When he armed the Valkyries with the ‘Warrior’s Equipment’ and several loots he gained from the battlefield, a quite convincing squad of Valkyries was made.

“Good. Perfect.”

He made the fake Heda and Adenmaha wear helmets so that their faces wasn’t shown. It would be hard to explain if there were several similar faces.

Adding Heda and Adenmaha to the fake ones, there were nine in total.

As there were six warriors in Idun’s legion including Tae Ho, the

number of Valkyries was much bigger.

Adenmaha looked at Tae Ho with really lukewarm eyes and Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and said.

‘It certainly isn’t a saga but a cheat.’ (ED note: Cuchulainn should hook up with Ragnar!) He hadn’t lied, whatever the case.

And the effects was enough.

The newcomer warriors were standing on the deck as if to welcome Tae Ho’s return, and they all had enchanted expressions.

“Ohh! It’s just like Idun’s warrior had said!”

“Look at the Valkyries!”

“Idun’s warrior!”

“Our commander!”

They were all bearded, grown men, but it was nice to see that they were jumping in joy.

“This is service.”

As Tae Ho rolled his finger ever so slightly, the fake Valkyries waved their hands towards the warriors and then the cheer of the warriors became louder.

“A King needs a strategy to fool the enemy.”

While Merlin decorated his words, Adenmaha took a deep breath and fell behind. It was because a beautiful woman showed from between the cheering warriors.

“Heda,”

Tae Ho said. As soon as the ship arrived on the deck, he jumped down and stood in front of her.

Heda smiled brightly instead of running towards him and embracing him.

“Hello once again?”

Tae Ho smiled and then opened his arms and hugged her.

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (1) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 2: The land of darkness (2)

It was their first meeting in two months since they hadn't been able to after the battle at Kalliv Castle.

Heda, who'd been embraced by Tae Ho, shrank down as if it was embarrassing being in front of the other warriors but then bit her lips and then hugged him back.

'Heda is certainly the best.'

Freya was so beautiful that one could imagine her just by closing their eyes, but for Tae Ho, Heda always came first.

As Tae Ho wanted to receive a blessing like that, Heda flinched once again and then blessed him in the cheek.

Heda had boldly blessed him in front of thousands of warriors at Kalliv Castle, but it wasn't possible to always act like that.

After all, she had firmly steeled her resolve before doing that. No, rather than having done that, she had just went for it.

The newcomer warriors clamored while Heda was still feeling embarrassed.

Tae Ho placed his lips on her forehead and then looked at the warriors.

"You are familiar faces."

"Ohh! So you remember us!"

"I am from Katar! I fought with you, commander, in recapturing Katar!"

"I was also there!"

"Sob sob...For you to remember the names of the likes of us."

One warrior that was overflowing with emotions said while his

eyes got red.

‘I don’t remember your names.’

And he had never said that.

But Tae Ho decided to get past it as it was something good.

And actually, Tae Ho didn’t remember their faces either. He felt like he had seen them at first glance, but it was merely that.

‘Were you also like this in the world you used to live in? You said that you were a popular and famous person. Always pretending to remember your fans.’

Cuchulainn criticized him while clicking his tongue, but Tae Ho didn’t mind.

Because he didn’t do that with evil intentions.

Tae Ho remembered that time when a singer he liked when he was young acted friendly towards him in a signing conference. He had really liked that. Even though he knew that it was fan service and she didn’t actually know him.

“A King has to know how to catch the hearts of the public.”

Merlin realized the situation from a distance and tried to adorn Tae Ho in a good way, and Adenmaha looked at Tae Ho that was still hugging Heda.

On the other hand, Tae Ho removed his hands that were holding Heda’s waist and then hit his chest twice to express etiquette like a warrior.

“Welcome to Idun’s legion.”

It was a Valhalla-like etiquette that was now engraved in his person. The newcomer warriors put on moved expressions and then also hit their chests.

“It’s just like the commander had said.”

“We will devote ourselves for Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“We will train earnestly so the seniors that are fighting outside don’t get embarrassed of us.”

Tae Ho’s eyes sharpened while the warriors stated their opinions.

“The seniors that are fighting outside?”

Tae Ho turned to look at Heda and spoke in a low voice, and Heda cleared her throat and looked at a distance place while mumbling as if making an excuse.

“Its...true? That you just returned after fighting, I mean.”

She didn’t lie. Actually, their senior, Tae Ho, had been fighting outside and just returned.

‘You really are perfect for each other.’

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and remarked.

Tae Ho pinched the side of the embarrassed Heda and then put on a dignified expression towards the warriors.

“I will be anticipating your growth, and warriors, have some pride in yourselves. Being in this place is already proof of how great you are.”

It wasn’t that anyone could enter Valhalla.

It was easy to forget as Valhalla gathered great people, but even the lowest-ranked warriors were great warriors that had a high name in Midgard.

The warriors put on moved expressions at Tae Ho’s words and hit their chests. He really liked their shining eyes.

“Did you practice or what?”

“A bit.”

As Heda asked him in his ear, Tae Ho answered immediately.

And actually, this was something that he was quite accustomed to as he had led the warriors in Midgard for a month already. So the situation was different to when he was a lowest-ranked warrior.

“Now now, let’s leave it here and return. You guys were just training right?”

Adenmaha, that was looking from behind, stepped up and said. The warriors seemed to be accustomed to listening to Adenmaha that they returned to the training center without any complaints.

“Wow. How Valkyrie like.”

“Hmph”

Adenmaha snorted like usual at Tae Ho’s admiration.

And then Heda laughed and whispered towards Tae Ho.

“Did you hear about Rolo and McLaren?”

“A little bit from Adenmaha. I was planning on going to see them after I met Idun-nim....but it isn’t that they’ve been weakened right?”

“Yes, they are fine. They have rather improved. There are also good notices for Rolo.”

“Good notices?”

“He became a father.”

Tae Ho blinked his eyes at Heda’s answer. It was because he couldn’t understand it immediately.

Adenmaha pulled on Tae Ho’s arms as if it was unavoidable and said.

“Rolo’s wives laid some eggs.”

“Eggs? Did they hatch?”

“Not yet, but I believe that it won’t be long.”

“There are three eggs.”

Heda added to Adenmaha’s words.

“Ohh Rolo. Ohh Rolo!”

Tae Ho became sincerely happy. He could only do so.

For Rolo to have become a father and to have had kids. For there to be more gryphons that could be used in Idun's legion!

'You should keep working hard. Fighting, I mean. Do I have to bring back the females we left in the forest?'

'This...there's no worse slave than him.'

The first one to speak was Tae Ho, and the last one was Cuchulainn.

Tae Ho cleared his throat a few times and then asked Heda, "I'm looking forward to meeting Rolo. You are able to fix the wing, right?"

"Yes. It will take some time, but it is possible. It has already grown by half."

Tae Ho let out a sigh of relief. It wasn't only because he had lost Rolo's mobility. The advantage that flying held when facing flying monsters was really big, so he was sincerely glad that Rolo would be able to fly again.

"Ah, look at myself."

Tae Ho raised his head and then turned around.

"Heda, this is Merlin. Merlin, Heda."

Tae Ho introduced Merlin with a sorry face. Merlin flashed a smile at Tae Ho and approached Heda, and Heda expressed etiquette first towards Merlin.

"Representative Valkyrie of Idun's legion, Valkyrie Heda, greets the great magician of Camelot. Welcome to Idun's legion."

"You are quite like the King has described you. Nice to meet you."

Merlin also greeted Heda with a bright face. Heda greeted back Merlin with her eyes and then spoke to Adenmaha.

"Adenmaha, can I entrust you with showing him the residence?"

“Yes, it’s fine. Merlin, over here. I will first introduce you to your lodging.”

Adenmaha answered Heda instantly and then approached Merlin. As they had become closer after having known each other for a long time, the way they spoke was very comfortable.

When Merlin and Adenmaha left, Heda grabbed on Tae Ho’s hand.

“Now, let’s go greet Idun-nim.”

That was the first thing he had to do when returning to the residence.

However, Tae Ho pulled on Heda’s arm instead of following her.

“Before that, don’t you have something to do?”

Heda tilted her head at his words, but she soon understood his meaning. She checked his surroundings with a flushed face and then stood on her toes.

—

“Did you really have to do that in front of the shrine?”

Idun said, and Tae Ho cleared his throat.

Idun giggled in front of the apple tree in the plains like always and then sat in a boulder and gestured Tae Ho.

“My warrior, Tae Ho. Come closer.”

Tae Ho sat next to Idun as he was already accustomed to it. Idun placed her hand on top of Tae Ho’s and said, “You have overcome a really difficult fight. I’m extremely proud of you.”

“It was all thanks to you....are you okay?”

“I did overdo it a bit....but it’s only a minor issue. I’m fine now, so don’t worry.”

Idun put on a bright smile, but she looked more exhausted than usual.

Thinking about it, it was an obvious thing as she had even collapsed out of exhaustion for having sent too much strength to Tae Ho.

As sorry and worry appeared in Tae Ho's eyes, Idun hurriedly shook her head and spoke bluntly.

"I'm really fine. For me, collapsing out of exhaustion isn't the most fearful thing to happen. Something happening to you is what scares me the most, so from now on, don't hesitate on using my strength, understand?"

"Thank you...."

He couldn't think of any other words than that. Idun nodded once and then said something as if trying to change the subject.

"Now, take this."

The item Idun took out from the air was something Tae Ho knew well.

"Oh?"

The white flying horse wing coat.

It was an item that didn't enter his hands as he always chose the other item when he had to choose.

"I have missed the opportunities to give it to you, so I want to give it to you now."

Oddly, it seemed to weigh on Idun.

Tae Ho received the wing coat with a happy heart.

"Thank you. I will use it well."

"Right, then shall I rebuke you for a bit?"

Idun said while smiling and Tae Ho blinked as he didn't understand her words because of her bright smile.

"Re...buke?"

“Right, rebuke. What in the world is this ‘Idun, Heda. Idun, Heda’ nonsense? You aren’t able to give up Heda at all?”

“Uh, um.....”

“You are too much. For me, you are the best, but for you, it seems like Heda is the best.”

Idun lowered her head as if she was really sad and then spoke with a childish voice. You could clearly feel the desolation and sadness in her even though her expression wasn’t showing because the eye cover was covering half of her face.

Tae Ho grew baffled once again and didn’t know what to do. Idun laughed as she was satisfied and said.

“I’m joking. You still can’t tell? And well, I will forgive you as my name comes first.”

“Th-thank you.”

He never knew when she started joking, but he was glad as she got over it.

Idun smiled brightly and then put a bit of strength in her hands that were on top of Tae Ho’s.

“Now, now, let’s talk about how we will operate the legion. Honestly speaking, I was really looking forward it.”

The Goddess and the commander of the legion would speak about the future nurturing of the legion.

It was new for Tae Ho, but actually it was also new for Idun.

Idun said with an excited voice,

“New warriors entered our legion. Although we have only five, it will increase from here on out. Based on what Freya-unnie said....about ten more warriors will arrive in about fifteen days.”

“Only in our legion?”

“Right, only in our legion.”

Midgard was facing a Valhalla boom because of the descent of the warriors of Valhalla. Thanks to that, the recruiting speed was also becoming faster.

It wasn't that good of a situation looking at the entirety of Asgard, but it was good news for Idun's legion.

"There are many things we should prepare as new warriors will enter our legion suddenly. You should check the residence at a later time. There are also places that have been started to be reconstructed."

A mold of the residence formed from light after Idun drew a rune in the air surged from the ground.

"The lodging has certainly gotten bigger."

"Right? Thanks to you, a lot of funds entered our legion, so we are quite relaxed on the expenses."

The lodging had gotten four times bigger since Tae Ho first entered the legion. Tae Ho looked at the other places and asked, "But is it only for the lodging?"

"I left the other places intact on purpose. I wanted to listen to the opinion of the commander."

As Idun waved her hand once again, all the buildings excluding the lodging and the shrine disappeared, and then, several buildings started to appear instead.

'It looks like a simulation game.'

One could freely adjust the size of the molds, and as there were several variations, it was fun to place them in alternating spots.

"The recruiting of Valkyries is also an urgent matter."

It looked enough with two Valkyries for sixteen warriors, but that wasn't the case.

A legion needed at least three Valkyries to function properly.

One to administer the residence, another one to train the warriors, and the last one to lead the warriors that were dispatched.

Actually, that meant that the minimum number of Valkyries one needed was three. In addition, taking into account that Adenmaha may get called at any time by Tae Ho, there was a need to recruit two more Valkyries.

“Where do we recruit Valkyries from?”

“Normally, from the Valkyrie training school of Freya’s legion, but we prioritize the opinions of the Valkyries, so we can’t just bring them.”

“But we will still have to apply for it. Shall I go myself?”

“There’s no need. Leave it to Heda. Also, the training center for Valkyries prohibits entry to men. As you have those rumors around you, there’s a high probability they won’t let you enter.”

Just what kind of rumor was she talking about?

As Tae Ho asked with his eyes, Idun put on an expression as if she really had to tell him.

“First of all, I have something to request to you. I have someone I really want to recruit as a Valkyrie, but she said that she would like to speak with you first.”

“Someone you want to recruit?”

“Right, we need her to train the warriors.”

Idun offered more information, and Tae Ho couldn’t help but know who she was talking about.

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (2) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 3: The land of darkness

(3)

Generally speaking, there were three types of Valkyries in Valhalla.

The first was a pureblooded Valkyrie whose parents were Gods.

Another was a half Valkyrie who only had one parent as a God.

The last type was a human warrior that entered Valhalla and became a Valkyrie.

Tae Ho knew all three of these types well enough as the 'Valkyrie Master'.

Valkyrie Reginleif was a pureblooded Valkyrie. Based on Ingrid's words, when looking at the pureness of the blood, Reginleif was the best.

In addition, she was born from the King of Gods, Odin, and a Goddess of Asgard.

This meant that she was a half sister to the God of Thunder, Thor. Because of that, she possessed a special bloodline even among the other pureblooded Valkyries.

Valkyrie Rasgrid and Kaldea were Valkyries who only had one of their parents as a God.

God and human, God and fairie, God and giant, and more. There were many mixed breeds, and more than half of the Valkyries belonged to this category.

Rasgrid was a mix breed born from Odin and a light fairy, and she was thus a half sister of Reginleif.

She boasted of her outstanding abilities suitable for someone that received the blood of Odin, but just by looking at the bloodline, she wasn't that special. It was because these types of Valkyries could

only possess a fourth of Odin's blood.

For the third type, Ingrid and Gandur were prime examples.

Ingrid grabbed the attention of the Valkyries after entering Valhalla as a shieldmaiden and so became one.

Valkyries that were humans got chosen similarly to Ingrid.

Gandur had also gotten picked by the Valkyries, but there was a difference with Ingrid. She wasn't a shieldmaiden but a hunter.

There were really few cases that a female warrior that wasn't a shieldmaiden entered Valhalla, so she belonged to the real minority when she was a warrior and also a Valkyrie.

"Gandur doesn't treasure Siri for nothing."

Ingrid had said while explaining about the Valkyries.

Looking at it with a modern point of view, Siri was someone that came from the same village of Gandur and got to work in the same place. They were like a junior and a senior from a school.

The purebloods had the lowest numbers, and the human Valkyries were a seventh or eighth part from the mix breeds.

There were really scarce Valkyries that didn't belong to any of these categories, the ones you could call irregulars.

"Cases like me?"

"Yes, cases like you."

Adenmaha was a Valkyrie that didn't even belong to Asgard.

There were few cases after the Great War, that they received refugees from Erin, but there were really a minority.

In addition, Adenmaha didn't receive education from the Valkyrie training center that Freya ran. If you also took this into account, then she was an unprecedented case.

"Mm, I feel good as I became somewhat special."

‘But it just means that you are a parachute.’

Tae Ho just mumbled inwardly as Adenmaha was boasting with a satisfied face.

“But anyways, it should also be a really special case this time.”

“Probably, right? Although I doubt they will even allow it.”

Tae Ho smiled and answered bitterly and stopped walking. He looked at the place he would enter.

It was the dwelling place of Scathach that was located at the deepest part of Idun’s residence.

A pure human that belonged to Erin and didn’t even have a little bit of blood from a God flowing in her.

However, she was Queen of the Land of Darkness. She was an outstanding teacher that had raised peerless heroes like Cuchulainn and was also a great magician that ruled the turbid lands where life and death crossed.

In addition, Erin was a place that the boundary between humans and Gods was vague. She was a human but was stronger than normal Gods and was a mystical existence.

Because of that, Tae Ho doubted that Scathach would be able to get recruited as a Valkyrie.

The case of Adenmaha was closer to being a movement. You could say that she moved from being a normal Goddess A of the Tuatha De Danann to a normal Goddess B of Asgard.

On the other hand, if Scathach did become a Valkyrie, it wouldn’t be a zero sum game.

Of course, it became different if she became a high-ranked Valkyrie like a representative of a legion or a Valkyrie lord, but neither such seats were given out easily.

As it were, the representative Valkyrie of Idun’s legion was Heda. In addition, even if Scathach’s abilities and qualifications were

enough, she still wouldn't have received any education to become a Valkyrie.

A representative Valkyrie was someone that represented a legion and at the same time, led all the Valkyries in a legion. They couldn't put Scathach, that was a foreigner, on that seat.

"You said that the position of Valkyrie lord was given by Freyja, who's the Valkyrie master, right?"

"Yes, I heard so."

The naming of a Valkyrie lord was something that could only be done by the Valkyrie master, Freya, and the owner of Valhalla, Odin.

With this knowledge, it was impossible to promise Scathach the seat of a Valkyrie lord.

"Well, it will somehow turn out well."

Adenmaha spoke moderately and then took a deep breath. She spoke like this but she was still learning magic of the Tuatha De Danann from Scathach even after she became a Valkyrie. For Adenmaha, she just wanted to dodge the notion that her harsh and strict master could become a coworker of hers.

Unexpectedly, Scathach nodded too easily when she faced Tae Ho and Adenmaha.

"Fine. But I have two conditions."

Scathach spoke naturally as if she already knew that Tae Ho would come find her.

"The first is a temporary work. I'm always grateful towards Idun, who took me in after I lost my country and my citizens and had nowhere to go, but I can't become her Valkyrie forever."

Scathach was Queen of the Land of Darkness. Although it was something that would happen in the future, she would have to leave the residence of Idun to rebuild her kingdom.

Tae Ho nodded. It was because he had already heard from Idun that it was fine to accept her condition.

Idun also didn't think that Scathach would remain as her Valkyrie forever.

"The second condition is an assignment. If you can accomplish it, I will become a Valkyrie."

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

Compared to the first condition, the second one was difficult to understand.

For a condition to become a Valkyrie to be an assignment.

He couldn't understand how it would benefit Scathach.

But it was different for Cuchulainn. He, who had already come to Scathach's residence before them and was roaming in a spiritual state, laughed and said,

"Well, the time hasn't only come, but he has already passed it."

"Cuchulainn?"

Tae Ho looked at Cuchulainn as if asking what he was talking about.

Although it was only limited to Scathach's residence, he touched the incomplete Gae Bolg in a spiritual state and said in a low voice,

"Tae Ho, do you remember when we first met? Back then, I told you that I would become your teacher."

He had certainly done so and Cuchulainn had already accomplished quite a lot of that.

"You did teach me a lot."

"Yes, I did teach you various things. I even advised you every time you fought and even transmitted the geass and the sentence of the Milesians."

Looking at it like this, Cuchulainn had provided more tutoring than Ragnar, the formal teacher of Tae Ho.

“But they aren’t proper teachings. I have yet to transmit a single technique of Scathach to you.”

Frankly, the situation between Tae Ho and Cuchulainn and Tae Ho and Ragnar was really rather vague.

Normally, if one were master and disciple, the disciple would learn the techniques of the master.

However, Tae Ho had never learned from Ragnar’s swordsmanship nor Cuchulainn spear techniques.

“Part of it is because you already have some techniques of your own, but there is another big reason. Do you know what it is?”

Tae Ho tilted his head. It was because he couldn’t guess easily.

Ragnar was a warrior that had once climbed to the top rank, but his swordsmanship wasn’t as outstanding as the Knights of the Round Table.

Knowing this, he didn’t transmit any knowledge of swordsmanship to Tae Ho as he already had Kalsted’s sword techniques. What Ragnar taught Tae Ho was how to use his saga, using the power of a God, or reading the mind of the opponent. Merely basic fighting methods.

Cuchulainn was different from Ragnar. If Ragnar was a great king, then Cuchulainn was a great warrior.

In addition, he had his outstanding spear techniques that he took self confidence in as being the best in Erin.

But even then, Cuchulainn hadn’t transferred his spear techniques to Tae Ho, and it wasn’t because he already had Kalsted’s techniques.

“You were lacking in skill.”

Pushing a beast off from a cliff to tell it to fly wasn’t education. It

would only lead to an early grave.

The transmission of a technique was similar. It was impossible to transmit an excessive technique to the ones that didn't have the ability, and rather, there was a possibility it may destroy the original techniques one had.

“But it's enough now. You have remaining skills to learn all of Scathach's techniques.”

Tae Ho was now a superior-ranked warrior, and just like Cuchulainn had said, it wasn't the time, but he had already passed the threshold of requirements.

Scathach leaned her body on the chair and then said softly,

“Tae Ho, the assignment I will be giving you is simple. Learn the spear techniques from Scathach's techniques. If you get to a certain level, I will become your Valkyrie.”

Just like she had said, it was an assignment.

Still, he couldn't understand that at all. It wasn't something that benefitted Scathach directly.

Scathach faced Tae Ho's doubtful face and smiled. She put on the face of a wise master instead of a cat and continued.

“Didn't I tell you already? I'm grateful towards Idun for having taken me in. In addition, if I become your Valkyrie, your force will increase as you are a successor of Erin. It's not a bad thing. You had said that it was the 'Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him', right?”

Only words stated a condition, but she was already planning on becoming a Valkyrie of Idun. And all of that was for Tae Ho, the successor of Erin.

“Thank you.”

He couldn't say anything else besides that as it was really unexpected and he was really grateful. Scathach laughed

arrogantly like the Queen of the Land of Darkness which everyone feared.

“I am a teacher by nature. Raising up a disciple is one of the joys in my life so there’s no need to be that moved.”

The reason Scathach managed to raise great heroes wasn’t only because she possessed outstanding teaching skills.

Scathach loved the young ones that had talent, courage, and passion. She sincerely enjoyed teaching those people.

She would polish gemstones and turn them to jewels.

She would bloom the talent of the young ones and turn them into heroes.

Scathach felt joy in all that process. She really was a born teacher.

“Um, but is it something that can be learnt easily? Isn’t it impossible to do so in a short time?”

Adenmaha, who’d been just listening silently, raised her hand and asked.

It was because Idun’s legion needed Valkyries immediately. If they had time to wait for Tae Ho to master all the spear techniques, then they would have just recruited Valkyries from the training center.

Scathach and Cuchulainn looked at themselves and laughed.

“Of course it is. That’s why you must use the vision of the Scathach’s techniques. This isn’t something that can be done just by training hard.”

“A.....vision?”

Tae Ho asked with a nervous voice.

For it to be impossible just through hard work alone, what then did he have to do?

Scathach opened her eyes sharply and smiled. It was the most bewitching and beautiful smile Tae Ho had seen from her until now, and because of that, he grew even more nervous.

Cuchulainn spoke with a fresh face as if prodding his nerves.

“You will know if you do it. You already know the style of master, right?”

Scathach style.

Tae Ho stiffened up unconsciously the moment he remembered the past.

Adenmaha, an actual student of Scathach, seemed to have some unwanted memories surface, and she grabbed Tae Ho's hands tightly and put on a teary face.

“You have to survive.”

“Huh?”

Just what had happened to Adenmaha in the past months?

But there was no time to ask. Cuchulainn put on a devilish face as if telling Tae Ho to suffer too before grabbing his arm. Scathach spoke with a face filled with joy.

“Let's start immediately.”

“Ri-right now?!”

“Yes, right now.”

So that's why they said that you could enter as you pleased but not go out.

Scathach smiled sweetly and then rolled her fingers. She activated some magic.

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (3) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 4: The land of darkness

(4)

“Hedaaaaa!”

Tae Ho screamed and rose up. He looked just like someone that was having a nightmare, as his body was completely sweaty.

“That’s a peculiar scream.”

“Pant....Pant....Cuchulainn?”

Tae Ho’s breathing was ragged as he turned his head. He could see Cuchulainn snickering.

“Are you alright? Do you remember something?”

Cuchulainn sat next to Tae Ho and threw a question. Tae Ho faced Cuchulainn with an absent-minded face but then looked at himself in a surprised way.

“No way! I passed out even though I have Idun’s blessing?”

Idun’s blessing hadn’t let go of Tae Ho’s consciousness even when Tae Ho was at the verge of death.

But now, he had passed out so cleanly even though he had Idun’s blessing.

Cuchulainn faced Tae Ho’s shock and then placed his hand on his shoulder as if it was fun.

“Isn’t it fortunate? If you hadn’t passed out, it would have been more painful.”

“Well, that’s true but...”

Those were truthful words, but he didn’t want to agree to it.

Cuchulainn patted Tae Ho’s shoulders again.

“But hey, you still endured it for quite a long time. It’s the first time I’ve seen someone faint after enduring it for a long time like

you.”

The majority lost their consciousness as soon as they started.

Tae Ho opened his eyes sharply at the compliment that wasn't a compliment and threw a question with a sigh.

“But still, it does have an effect right?”

“Of course there's an effect. Being able to speak with face to face is proof of that.”

“Huh? Now that I see...!”

Tae Ho looked at his surroundings. It wasn't the residence of Scathach, but Cuchulainn had a profoundly clearer shape.

“Right, this isn't the real world. It's the imaginary world of master.”

Cuchulainn stood up and looked at his surroundings. The world was dyed in ash gray and was covered by a big shadow.

“You can say that it's another Land of Darkness. Even though Erin was destroyed, the Land of Darkness...that world still remains.”

An incomplete world that was between the boundary of life and death.

Erin was destroyed, but the Land of Darkness still remained. Scathach had lost her people and country, but she was still the queen of that land.

The reason Scathach was one of the best magicians in Erin wasn't because she had mastered several destructive or offensive magics.

Even though she was a Milesian, she was versed in the mystical powers of the Tuatha De Danann. She could naturally use the several wonders only the strong Gods of the Tuatha De Danann could use as if she were breathing.

In Erin, a magician wasn't someone that fought.

They were the protectors and transmitters of knowledge and wonders.

But of course, if great magicians like Merlin or Scathach fought in a magical region after taking enough preparations, the story changed. Cuchulainn usually thought of Scathach as someone he had to protect, but he didn't even think of that inside of the magical region of Scathach.

Cuchulainn looked down on Tae Ho and said,

“Listen well, Tae Ho. All the theories of the weapon techniques have been injected into your mind and body, but you aren't able to use them freely as they've just been engraved. If you want to use them properly, you will have to learn with your body.”

What Scathach did to Tae Ho was simple.

It took a long time to teach him the techniques one by one, so she forcefully engraved them in his body and mind.

It obviously wasn't an easy process and couldn't be repeated easily.

Tae Ho felt pain like his bones and flesh were torn apart. Tae Ho had been pushed to the brink of death several times in battles against the giants, but this time was the worst. He couldn't recall much that was more painful than this.

It was a process all the disciples of Scathach had to go through.

Because of that, Cuchulainn felt a sense of sympathy and pointed to a distant place with his chin.

“The tower you see over there is the Tower of Shadows. It has several floors in it, and there are floor masters protecting each floor. Defeat them and climb the tower. Every time you pass through a floor, you will be able to master one technique of Scathach's.”

When Tae Ho turned his head, he saw a big tower. It was a

common, pillar-type tower, but it was so high one wasn't able to see its peak.

“As master connected her imaginary world with your mind, you won't be able to completely use your saga. You won't be able to use the sagas that borrow external power like 'Idun's Warrior', and if possible, its good if you don't use the other sagas either as the objective of this tower is to increase your skills. The best thing is to pierce through with just weapon techniques as if head butting into the ground.

“What if I die when battling against a floor master?”

He didn't think that Scathach would give him a soft and easy going training by this point.

Cuchulainn shrugged his shoulders at Tae Ho's question and said, “Well, like you would have imagined, you won't really die in this place. You just have to determine yourself once again and repeatedly challenge it. There's no need to eat and sleep as its an imaginary world. You will continue fighting.”

Perhaps, it was worse than the myths of Valhalla that repeated endless wars. At least there was time to enjoy oneself after fighting in the myths of Valhalla.

Tae Ho thought of what he should do and how he should interpret Cuchulainn's words and then stood up abruptly.

“Wait, until when?”

“Until you give up. You already know what kind of person our master is.”

He could give up on the first floor and on the tenth floor.

Only, the things one could gain lessened the earlier they gave up.

“In addition, she has already said that she enjoys polishing gemstones into jewels.”

“Um. Was that polishing in a materialistic way?”

Cuchulainn just showed a white smile instead of nodded to his question. He patted Tae Ho's shoulder with a detached face.

“Cheer up.”

Tae Ho turned his eyes and then saw that the door of the Tower of Shadows was opening.

—

Adenmaha bit her lips upon seeing Tae Ho on top of the altar. His condition wasn't good at all. He was sweating while frowning and even screamed at times.

“You witch! What the hell did you do to mast.....kyak!”

Adenmaha ended up cursing to Scathach as she was nervous but then got her arm twisted and fell to the ground. Scathach rode on top of Adenmaha and twisted her arm even more.

“Your manners are bad.”

“Ah! It hurts! Hurts! I was wrong!”

Adenmaha begged while crying, but Scathach didn't let her go easily. She gave her plenty of time so that Adenmaha could engrave the lesson of today in both her body and mind.

And a few minutes later—

Scathach let go of Adenmaha's arm and said while standing up, “He has just started with the training.”

Adenmaha didn't have the strength to reply at her answer that came with a slow tempo. She sobbed unfairly and then turned to look at Tae Ho and said, “His frowning looks painful.”

“The price you pay is as big as what you gain.”

Scathach's philosophy stated that there was no easy thing in the world.

“The timeframes of the imaginary world and the real world are different. You can say that it's a place of time dilation. A month in

that place is like a day here.”

“Uh, I think I have heard of something similar from master.”

It was certainly something that came out in manhwas (mangas).

While Adenmaha shut her lips and tried to remember, Scathach smirked.

“You now call him as master really well. It seems like you like him?”

“It’s a- hmph.”

Adenmaha pouted while turning her gaze away. Scathach smiled with her eyes as if Adenmaha was really cute.

“Hedaaa!”

Tae Ho screamed again. Adenmaha turned to look at Tae Ho hurriedly, and Scathach frowned and said, “It seems like it has started for real.”

It was something Scathach was quite accustomed to. As a result, she spoke towards Adenmaha, who was uneasy while wiping off Tae Ho’s sweat, in a calm voice.

“Tell Heda that he will be like this for a few days.”

“You don’t know when he will wake up?”

“That depends on his disposition.”

If he gave up immediately, he would be able to wake up right now, but in the first place, Scathach wouldn’t have used the magic that connected to her imaginary world if Tae Ho was that kind of person.

“I’m quite looking forward.....to what floor he can reach and when he will wake up.”

She would polish a gemstone and turn it into a jewel.

Joy appeared in Scathach’s eyes and Adenmaha shrunk down with a scared face.

—
“Heda.”

Heda turned around hurriedly at the low call.

“Freya-nim.”

“So you’ve requested to recruit a Valkyrie.”

Freya spoke towards Heda who was expressing etiquette gently.

The place the two people were at was at the dock of Freya’s legion.

The biggest legion among the several legions in Valhalla didn’t belong to Odin’s nor Thor’s.

The legion of Freya was located in the center of Valhalla and boasted its great size comparable to several other legions together. Naturally, it had several docks.

Among them, the one Heda arrived at was the one that was connected with the Valkyrie Training Center.

Heda put on a nervous face and stiffened because Freya spoke about the reclutation without even greeting her.

“Don’t be too nervous. It’s also a happy thing for me that Idun’s legion has started to rise up again. I didn’t bring it out to find a fault in it.”

“Thank.....you.”

“How stiff.”

Freya laughed at Heda placing her hand on her chest and then closed the distance with her. She looked at the nervous face of Heda up close and then nodded.

“You have certainly become prettier than before. It seems like your face is shining. I don’t like that Idun’s warrior acted so calmly after seeing me.....but I can only admit this.”

Heda didn’t know up to what point Freya was joking.

Regardless, there was no evil in Freya's eyes. In addition, Heda could only show an embarrassed smile because of the contents of the conversation.

Freya giggled. She pinched Heda's cheek as if the embarrassed Heda was cute and then said, "The Valkyries in the Valkyrie Training Center are quite interested in Idun's legion. They are also really interested in Idun's warrior. You will be able to get someone that wants to join without much problem."

"Thank you."

"Well, I didn't really do anything. It's thanks to you and the warrior of Idun for having worked so hard."

As it were, Idun's legion was a legion that was quite popular within the Valkyrie Training Center.

First, the number of Valkyries was low. That meant that a Valkyrie who has just graduated didn't have that many predecessors.

Of course, it would be a complete failure if no successors entered, but Idun's legion had started to rise up completely. The warriors and the Valkyries would increase in an instant.

There were few predecessors but a lot of successors.

As there were few Valkyries, if someone entered now, even a greenhorn Valkyrie that had just graduated would be able to take a spot.

It would be even weirder if it wasn't popular.

"I will have to go slowly."

Freya mumbled in a low voice and looked at Heda. She held her hand still and then looked at Heda's golden eyes.

"Say hello to Idun."

It wasn't her usual, cute voice.

It was a voice and expression that had the affection of the Goddess of Beauty and Magic.

“Yes, I will.”

Heda answered while putting on a complicated face, and Freya nodded slowly. She put on a playful smile again and let go of Heda’s hand.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Freya hit her abundant chest twice and then turned around. Heda looked at her back for a moment and then let out a long sigh.

“I should return.”

There were many things to do in the residence.

Heda hopped on the wooden boat and then steered it towards Idun’s residence.

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (4) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 5: The land of darkness

(5)

Time flowed.

One day-two days-fifteen days.

It was a long and a short time, but there were quite big changes in the residence of Idun.

The biggest change was the transformation of the population.

New warriors entered Idun's legion just like Freya had told them. They numbered twelve in total.

Adding them to the original five, there were now seventeen lowest-ranked warriors.

Of course, it was a really embarrassing thing to call just seventeen people a legion, but in the first place, Idun's legion only had Tae Ho. Compared to before, one could say that it had become exponentially more legion-like.

Idun followed Tae Ho's advice and built a big lodging for the warriors. If the original lodging was a hut, then the new one that was built was a huge mansion. It even had three floors so it would be able to accomodate more than a hundred warriors.

It was a mansion built from thinking of the future.

Aside from the lodging of the warriors, a training center, smithy, restaurant, and other buildings were also installed.

"We also built a lodging for the Valkyries."

Adenmaha mumbled in a low voice in front of the altar where Tae Ho was lying and then smiled shakily.

"I also have more juniors now."

Heda had obtained Adenmaha as her junior after a hundred years, but Adenmaha obtained two of her own in less than a

month.

Sigrun and Gudrun.

The two of them were Valkyries that had just graduated from the Valkyrie Training Center.

Sigrun was a sharp-eyed woman that had a long braid woven with her sea-blue hair. As she was also tall, she gave the impression of a sharp blade when she stood still.

On the other hand, Gudrun gave a soft impression. Her long, brown hair, slightly droopy eyes, and drowsy voice resembled her well. In addition, her body and character were also filled with an aspect of motherly love.

Adenmaha thought about Gudrun for a moment and then pouted. It wasn't always good if you were tall.

"I'm talking about stature. Height."

Adenmaha said as if she was making an excuse. Actually, it wasn't that great of an excuse as the two new Valkyries were taller than her.

Even Gudrun, the shorter one between the two, was taller than Heda. She was around the lower 170cm range, but as she had good proportions, it made her seem taller.

Sigrun was taller than Gudrun and had reached 180cm. As she also had good proportions, she seemed to be even taller than some warriors if seen from afar.

"But the two of them are good people."

Because they certainly treated Adenmaha as their senior even though there wasn't a big difference between them.

Right now, only Gudrun was in the residence. It was because Sigrun went out to lead warriors in an expedition.

Originally, it was normal to be led by a Valkyrie of one's own legion when warriors went out on an expedition. Tae Ho didn't

need a leading Valkyrie as he was had been the only warrior, but it wasn't the case for the new warriors.

“Ragnar said that it has now become a proper legion.”

Adenmaha still chirped about the changes like a baby bird.

“Rolo is almost completely healed. He can't fly yet, but should I say in a short while? McLaren can also dig into the ground again and is healthy.”

Adenmaha spoke up to that point and then laughed. It was because she thought of the warriors that were discussing among themselves as to who would become a gryphon rider by looking at Rolo's kids.

There was a big cave in Scathach's lodging.

But it wasn't a bit dark because of the light wards that were emanating light in the ceiling.

Adenmaha spoke again what she had already said yesterday and the day before and then wiped off the sweat from Tae Ho's forehead.

As if on cue, Tae Ho convulsed again.

“Hedaa!”

Tae Ho screamed and began pouring sweat, but it didn't end there.

“Iduun!”

Tae Ho let a groan after screaming and then gasped with a pained expression.

Adenmaha breathed in to calm down her surprised heart and then wiped off Tae Ho's sweat once again. It has already been fifteen days since she first saw this scene, but it didn't feel like she would get accustomed to it anytime soon.

“Idun! Heda!”

Tae Ho yelled once again, and Adenmaha put on a sulky expression instead of regret.

‘It would be good if he also calls out my name at times.’

If he screamed ten times, eight or nine of them were Heda’s name and the remaining ones were Idun.

‘Is it because my name is too long?’

Rather than shouting out “Adenmaha!”, it would be more comfortable to shout Heda or Idun.

But of course, Adenmaha also knew that it was nonsense.

“You play well alone.”

Adenmaha frowned at the voice that was heard behind her, but she then calmed her breathing and turned around with a business-like expression.

“We already finished with today’s classes.”

“Can’t I roam inside my house like a please?”

As Scathach stated her argument, Adenmaha could only cower and step back. But she didn’t just step back.

“He has only been screaming for fifteen days. Is this working properly?”

Scathach stood next to the altar and then nodded slowly as Adenmaha grumbled.

“Right, it’s going well. He grew accustomed to it better than I thought.”

Fifteen days having passed in this world meant that it has already been a year and three months in Tae Ho’s mind.

Looking at it externally, a difference of thirty times existed in the Land of Darkness.

Because of that, Scathach didn’t really mind Tae Ho’s shouts or pained expression. It was because it was a reaction that showed his

overall state and not the actual reaction.

Screaming, groaning, and panting were basic options for those who trained in the Tower of Shadows. As even the Prince of Light, Cuchulainn, had done so, there were no exceptions.

Opposingly, Adenmaha put on a bright expression when Scathach said that he was getting accustomed to it well.

“Is he doing well? Like, is he breaking the record or something?”

If one looked at Adenmaha still, she looked more like a puppy than a serpent. Scathach looked at Adenmaha’s rear trying to find her waving tail and answered.

“No, how can that be? He’s struggling on the lowest floor with the worst speed.”

Those weren’t words to tease Adenmaha. There was no one that was as slow among the ones she had put in the tower.

Adenmaha put on a disappointed face at Scathach’s words. Scathach looked at her face that showed all of her emotions and then opened her eyes sharply and said, “But it’s really, really interesting.”

Tae Ho was certainly roaming in the lower floors and the speed he conquered the tower was also the slowest.

However, it was certainly interesting. Not because he was too slow but because of his methods.

As Scathach’s eyes shone with a conspicuous color, Adenmaha opened her eyes widely as if she was moved with curiosity and then looked up at her.

Scathach just nodded instead of explaining, and Adenmaha pouted once again.

“You should tell me or something so I can be interested too.”

“Your words are short nowadays.”

Scathach said while opening her eyes sharply and Adenmaha flinched, but she just played dumb instead of making an excuse or saying that she was sorry. Adenmaha wasn't someone to forgive that arrogant attitude.

“Kyaak!”

Adenmaha, who'd been sitting down, screamed and rolled over. It was because Scathach had performed a cross lock on her.

Adenmaha screamed once again, but she didn't beg her to release her or said that she was sorry and instead gritted her teeth.

As she couldn't just suffer always.

A cross lock was something done by a human to another human. Because of that, Adenmaha was thinking of transforming into a sea serpent. She had been enduring it as the place was too narrow and it was burdensome if Scathach got crushed by her, but everything had its limit.

‘She's a witch, so she will do something about it!’

Will she die because of that?

Adenmaha closed her eyes and tried to transform.

Tried being the operative word.

“Uh-huh? It, it doesn't work- kyak!”

The last scream came out instinctively.

Scathach fixed her lock even tighter and then clicked her tongue and said with a pitiful voice, “This is my residence. Did you think that I would allow you to do what you wanted in the territory of a magician?”

Strong magicians had the power of a God in their magical territories. Scathach put more strength and Adenmaha couldn't endure it anymore.

“I-I'm sorry! Ah, hurts! It hurts!”

“What did you do wrong?”

“Po-polite words! I will! Use them! Ugh!”

“Fine. Let’s see how you do.”

Scathach undid the lock and stood up. Even though she had rolled on the ground, she didn’t look at all messy.

Contrary to her, Adenmaha was in full disarray. She barely stood up again and sat down, but her hair and clothes were a complete mess.

“Sob sob. Uahh.”

Scathach inspected Tae Ho once again while Adenmaha was sobbing pitifully, and then interest spread over Scathach’s face once again.

“So, what is so interesting?”

It seemed like her arm still hurt, for she still had a teary face. Scathach frowned while looking at Adenmaha but didn’t use recovery magic on her. It was to let the pain turn into a lesson.

Nevertheless, Scathach wasn’t planning on just leaving her alone. Scathach drew a rune in the air and said, “You will know if you see it directly.”

What she had been interested in.

The rune emitted a bright light and then a big window of light spread over Tae Ho’s chest.

“It’s Cuchulainn’s point of view.”

As soon as Scathach finished speaking, a scene appeared from outside the window of light. It was showing Tae Ho and the floor master.

—

Cuchulainn was checking the battle between Tae Ho and the floor master with crossed arms.

They were currently in the eleventh floor.

He was merely at the eleventh floor after a year and three months, so it was a really slow speed, but Cuchulainn didn't feel bored but interest just like Scathach.

The floor master Tae Ho was fighting against currently was one of Scathach's disciples, Ferdia mac Daman.

It was a clone instead of the real Ferdia, and his looks and abilities weren't those of when he was at his peak.

When he was in his youth-precisely speaking, when Cuchulainn first saw Ferdia mac Daman, his skills matched those of the clone's.

Tae Ho was using a big spear meant to do a lance charge to face the sword-and-shield-bearing Ferdia mac Daman.

There was obviously no way to fight against him properly. Tae Ho was barely managing to block Ferdia mac Daman's attacks.

Cuchulainn had already seen their fight more than forty times.

Ferdia mac Daman's weapons were always the sword and shield.

But it was different for Tae Ho. Even though he was most proficient with a sword, the types of weapons he used were much more widespread than a mere spear or axe.

Tae Ho was clearing the same floor several times.

After he defeated the floor master with a one-handed sword, he tried again with a two-handed sword. If he won again, he tried once more with a dagger and kept changing his weapons.

It was a method Cuchulainn had never thought of; perhaps, it was a stupid way. Because he was struggling to learn several weapons when it was hard to even learn one of them properly.

Actually, Tae Ho had defeated the floor masters quite easily with a sword, but he hadn't been able to do so with the other weapons.

‘Lil’ bastard.’

Tae Ho had died more than a thousand times the past year and three months. Even though it wasn’t a real death, the pain wasn’t illusory.

Because the pain one felt when they died was real.

But Tae Ho didn’t change his strategy. He proceeded with the ignorant method even though he died and kept dying.

‘Well, Idun’s warrior indeed.’

Cuchulainn had wondered seriously if the ones that received Idun’s blessing started to enjoy pain and became masochists.

But Cuchulainn didn’t deny Tae Ho’s method.

He would have stopped him if what Tae Ho was learning was martial arts, but what he was training in right now were Scathach’s techniques.

The reason Cuchulainn had said Scathach’s spear techniques was because Gae Bolg was the best weapon Tae Ho had, but it wasn’t that he was planning on forcing him to learn spear techniques.

In addition, Scathach’s techniques weren’t limited to just the spear techniques.

In normal martial arts, one learned how to use a particular weapon. How to use a sword, how to use a spear, or others.

But it was different for Scathach’s techniques. It taught the essence more than anything.

The eyes looking at the fight.

The moment one clashed their weapon against their opponent’s, they’d experience a normal way to fight, how they should fight, and how their opponent would move.

Thinking and analyzing was the normal thing.

But Scathach’s techniques hoped for something beyond that.

Being able to understand everything just by watching.

Analyzing more things in a systematized way than thinking and analyzing.

Eyes that had surpassed any reason.

And gaining insight through those eyes was the essence of Scathach's techniques.

It wasn't important what weapon one was holding. Just like a warrior of the Temple had said, all streams connected into one. Someone that had realized the essence of Scathach's techniques could be said to be able of expressing their strength completely through any weapon.

The Tower of Shadows was a place that made the nature of Scathach's techniques awaken forcefully.

And in that meaning, Tae Ho's way of training suited well with the Tower of Shadows. Battling with various weapons created various aspects.

In addition, it was also effective on training in the sentence of the Milesians.

Tae Ho was now able to communicate with the weapons registered in the 'Warrior's Equipment' and also with the weapons of the Knights of the Round Table.

Because of that, Cuchulainn and Scathach felt interest in Tae Ho. They didn't expect that Tae Ho would be able to awaken the essence in an instant, but he would at least be able to approach it.

And the expectations of the two people weren't wrong.

At some point, Tae Ho's movements had changed.

It was a change that occurred when one didn't realize it.

Tae Ho raised his huge spear, but he hadn't done so while thinking about it. It was a natural movement which saved his life. The attack that should have originally pierced Tae Ho's abdomen

was parried.

Tae Ho created some distance with Ferdia mac Daman and then Tae Ho realized a gap in the latter's defence. He moved his huge spear following him.

The attack of Ferdia mac Daman missed, and it wasn't able to even touch Tae Ho.

A smile appeared in Cuchulainn's face and Scathach, who was observing with a time difference, put on a similar expression. Adenmaha didn't know well how the situation was turning but smiled brightly as Tae Ho was fighting well.

Tae Ho looked at Ferdia mac Daman and understood in that moment.

The Knights of the Round Table once fought like this. They could see things like this.

The battle tilted to Tae Ho's favor and he had started to take the lead. Ferdia mac Daman was in a hurry to block Tae Ho's attacks.

Adenmaha clenched her fist and cheered for Tae Ho, but it was different for Cuchulainn and Scathach. The smile in their faces disappeared.

It was because they could know different from Adenmaha.

Tae Ho started to stab with his huge spear. It was a stab he had learned on the seventh floor, but it wasn't completely the same. There were other things mixed in it.

[Synchro rate: 61%]

Tae Ho got pushed in swordsmanship against the traitor Mordred and not in strength or speed either. He couldn't overcome Mordred's mysterious sword techniques.

Tae Ho blamed himself for that. He thought that he was at fault for not being able to recreate the sword techniques of Kalsted perfectly, who was the strongest swordsman in the Dark Age.

[Synchro rate: 62%]

He became able to execute Kalsted's sword techniques better than during the battle against Bress the Tyrant. Because of that, he was able to face Bress, who had overwhelmed him in speed, strength, and all the other areas.

And now he could understand.

There was a defect in Kasted's sword techniques.

A saga was a recreation of a legend.

Kalsted was the strongest swordsman in Dark Age, but there was no substance to back it up.

Only the image of the strongest sword technique still remained.
Shell.

Sword techniques that only had the external appearance.

But in this moment, Scathach's techniques were added to Kalsted's sword techniques.

[Synchro rate: 65%]

The synchro rate increased quickly, but Tae Ho didn't think of what was happening to him. He just understood it and received it naturally.

A combination of Kalsted's sword techniques and Scathach's techniques.

What was born from that—

What was made—

Cuchulainn opened his eyes widely, and Scathach let out a soft exclamation.

[Synchro rate: 69%]

Tae Ho stabbed with his huge spear.

Ferdia mac Daman couldn't block Tae Ho's attacks anymore.

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (5) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 6: The land of darkness

(6)

One attack.

It wasn't a flashy attack and there was no light or sound effect. It also wasn't fast or strong.

Just stabbing.

But it was a bit different. The stab Tae Ho had executed couldn't be compared to the ones he had executed until now.

Ferdia mac Daman couldn't parry nor dodge Tae Ho's attack. He just looked at the huge spear that had pierced his heart with an absentminded expression and then turned into light and disappeared.

The fortieth victory.

If he counted this, then Tae Ho had already won for the fortieth time against Ferdia mac Daman.

Tae Ho dropped the huge spear and stood still. He closed his eyes naturally and took a deep breath.

He felt like he could understand.

He could understand it with the recent battle, albeit not completely.

Cuchulainn and Scathach didn't explain about Scathach style techniques to Tae Ho in detail. They had told him that he would be able to realize them by himself as the important things were engraved in his body and mind.

He naturally cursed out as he was the one that would be suffering, but he couldn't refute it anymore.

The words of the two people were true.

He felt like he was learning a type of technique when he had first

started to climb the tower.

Slash like this when you slash.

Control your strength and speed like this.

There were quite flashy techniques among them. It wasn't excessive to say that the consecutive stabs he had learnt in the tenth floor was a kind of an ultimate attack.

But the essence of Scathach's style techniques weren't only that.

Insight.

Eyes that let you grasp how you had to move just with looking, how the enemy would move and how will the surroundings change.

Tae Ho hadn't completed it yet and had merely entered the early stages, but even with just that, the world Tae Ho saw had completely changed.

And it didn't end there.

Tae Ho opened his eyes slowly. he looked at the huge spear and then imagined the stab he had just executed.

It wasn't a technique of Scathach's style.

It was Kalsted's stab.

The sword techniques Tae Ho used until now all belonged to the 'Immortal Warrior'.

The strongest swordsman in the Dark Age, Kalsted.

It didn't have a specific shape. He did know some techniques recreated with his skills, but it wasn't enough with just that.

Swordsmanship wasn't merely a combination of skills.

With this as fact, Tae Ho didn't possess the strongest swordsmanship. He had merely displayed somewhat good movements with the image of the strongest swordsman through his saga.

This wasn't the case anymore.

Scathach's style techniques were added onto Kalsted's swordsmanship which previously only retained a faint image.

When it obtained the base of Scathach's style techniques, Kalsted's swordsmanship wasn't a virtual image anymore.

Scathach's insights had made that possible.

The sword techniques of Kalsted who'd lived in the Dark Age which weren't materialized were different from Tae Ho's newly made sword techniques.

The two of them shared the same image of the strongest swordsman, Kalsted. Two versions from the same source.

A saga was a recreation of reality.

Tae Ho laughed unconsciously. It was a laughter that was mixed with joy and a bit of absurdness.

It was the result of several things combining.

The saga, Scathach's techniques, the sentence of the Milesians, and the Tower of Shadows.

'Is it a combination of Asgard and Erin?'

If even one of those things were lacking, he wouldn't have been able to produce the current result.

Tae Ho slowly raised his head and looked at the front.

[Synchro rate: 69%]

10% had increased in an instant. The reason that the synchro rate, which had only increased 1% the past year and three months, had surged up explosively was simple.

Tae Ho was now able to use the sword techniques of Kalsted.

He had become that much closer to him.

'I feel like I can know.'

His thoughts about the synchro rate changed once again, and now, he felt like he realized it.

Tae Ho had two theories about the synchro rate until now.

The first one was established when he first entered Valhalla.

1% of the synchro rate meant that Tae Ho was able to execute 1% of Kalsted's strength.

It was the most intuitive theory, but he realized that that wasn't the case when he became an inferior-ranked warrior.

Because if that was the case, then he would have to be ten times stronger when he reached 10% from when he was at 1%.

But that wasn't the case. There were times that the increase in strength wasn't relative to the numbers.

Because of that, Tae Ho came up with the second theory.

Kalsted's strength was the result of his several skills, items, and Tae Ho's influence. Because of that, he wouldn't be able to recreate Kalsted's strength just with catching up in stats.

He had thought that it was a quite convincing theory, but he realized that it wasn't the case now.

'It's much simpler.'

The more the synchro rate increased, the closer Tae Ho moved to becoming Kalsted.

Precisely speaking, he grew closer to the 'strongest' image the Dragon Knight, Kalsted, had.

The synchro rate was a kind of scale, and that scale wasn't clear mathematically.

People normally felt a big difference between 19% and 20%. It was different depending with each person, but that difference was always bigger than that mathematic 1%.

The synchro rate was closer to a psychological resemblance.

Because of that, a big gap could obviously exist between 99% and 100%.

However close 99% seemed to be at completion, in the end, the 100% was the real completion. There was a great psychological difference in that 1% one couldn't describe with words.

It seemed like a messed up description, but it was somewhat convincing.

Because the saga was something like that.

It was the story of a hero that was transmitted from mouth to mouth and was shared by people.

‘Whatever the case, what’s certain is that I grow stronger the higher it gets.’

Tae Ho organized his thoughts simply and turned his head. Cuchulainn was smiling.

“Did you finish with the appreciation?”

“Somewhat.”

“Arrogant bastard.”

Cuchulainn was still smiling and his expression was closer to a friendly one rather than a curse.

Seeing this, Tae Ho also flashed a smile towards Cuchulainn. Cuchulainn looked at him for a moment and then looked at the huge spear.

“Scathach’s style techniques have been added onto your sloppy sword techniques. If we have to put a name, should it be ‘Scathach’s style, Tae Ho’s law’?”

The name was a bit weird but it wasn’t bad. Tae Ho nodded suitably and asked another thing.

“But Cuchulainn, you knew that my swordsmanship was a sham?”

“Of course I did. Ragnar should also know it.”

There was nothing to say about Cuchulainn, but Ragnar was also a master of the sword. They could realize that Tae Ho’s swordsmanship was a sham just by seeing a bit of it.

“Wait. Then the two of you just left me be?”

Even though they knew it was a mess?

Tae Ho was absentminded for a moment, as Cuchulainn had spoken too obviously, and then threw a question. Tae Ho was feeling betrayed even if but a little.

Cuchulainn merely shook his head instead of apologizing and then said with a sigh, “It was beyond our capabilities to intervene. You now have a lot of actual combat experience, but it wasn’t the case before. If we intervened for nothing and you started to use a sloppy swordsmanship instead of the strength of your saga, there was a high probability for you to grow weakened. We were just waiting for the right time.”

In addition, saying that Tae Ho’s swordsmanship was sloppy was only from the perspectives of the masters like Ragnar and Cuchulainn.

Even though his swordsmanship was sloppy, it was still a strength that belonged to his saga. It was more than enough to reach the intermediate-ranked warrior.

“But I honestly got surprised. I was just planning on replacing your sword techniques with Scathach’s style techniques, but the two became one. How marvelous.”

Cuchulainn finished speaking and then swung the spear he was holding. It was an attack that was executed so naturally that one could only perish by it even if they attentive.

However, Tae Ho blocked Cuchulainn’s attack. It was to the point that it was so natural it didn’t give the feeling that they had exchanged blows.

Cuchulainn smiled. He then swung his spear a few more times and Tae Ho blocked it all very lightly.

‘It feels like we are playing catch ball.’

Cuchulainn stopped his attacks the moment Tae Ho thought that.

“It’s good. The completion rate is high. Scathach’s style techniques indeed. Master is certainly amazing.”

“I do agree, but is that the only thing you have to say?”

In the end, he was just praising Scathach. Shouldn’t he praise Tae Ho-no, Kalsted’s sword techniques in situations like this?

Cuchulainn shook his head at Tae Ho’s question as if it was nonsense.

“It is my philosophy that the strongest martial art doesn’t exist. A warrior of the Temple I met in the Great War told me this, and I agreed to it completely.”

“What did he say?”

Cuchulainn’s answer was a bit off the mark, but Tae Ho asked as he was curious as to what he would say.

Cuchulainn smirked and answered,

“A strongest army doesn’t exist, but a strongest person does. There’s no need for me to interpret it further, right?”

Tae Ho nodded slowly. In the end, it was more important who the person was rather than the techniques they displayed.

“Of course, ranks also exist in martial arts. Because of that, someone that has the same skills can become strong or weak depending on what martial arts he’s learned. But contrary to that, even though you do learn some martial arts, you will also grow weak or strong depending on who you are.”

Cuchulainn saw Scathach’s style techniques as training an ability

of a person rather than a technique to handle weapons.

As the essence of Scathach's techniques was one of gaining insight, it was a correct description if one interpreted it as such.

'In the end, he's saying that Scathach is the best.'

Because Scathach's techniques could train people, and the handling of weapons was also outstanding.

"Looking at it with that meaning, your newly made....."

"Kalsted's techniques."

"Right, you can say that it's a martial art that is closer to the concept of the strongest."

Cuchulainn nodded as if he agreed to his own words and said, "Whatever the case, the conclusion is that our master is great and so you are too, but you shouldn't get too conceited. You still haven't been able to reach the essence of it."

Cuchulainn finished speaking and then swung his spear once again. Tae Ho also blocked it reflexively this time, but it was different from before.

He wasn't able to see it properly. He could see the next move Cuchulainn had planned clearly, but now it was faint.

"You can't see it well right? It's because there's a clear difference between you and me."

The both of them had learned Scathach's style techniques, but the completion was different.

Tae Ho's insight couldn't be compared to the strongest warrior of Erin, the Prince of Light, Cuchulainn.

"But if you are able to reach the absolute peak and you get the transcendent eyes..... You will be able to stand victorious no matter who your opponent is."

Scathach's techniques had the peak as their objective.

The eyes of a transcendent that saw through the essence of everything.

“Well, this is merely a possibility, but I and master still haven’t reached that ideal peak.”

But Cuchulainn still sent him a proud smile as if he was looking forward to it.

Actually, he had been a bit surprised that Tae Ho was able to block his attack. He had swung his spear to hit him, but for him to block it....

‘Is this Kalsted’s style techniques?’

The strongest swordsman in the Dark Age whose image was added to Scathach’s techniques.

Cuchulainn could feel his blood boil. He couldn’t not look forward to it when he imagined how strong Tae Ho would eventually become.

Tae Ho evaded Cuchulainn’s burdensome but thankful eyes and changed the subject.

“But Cuchulainn, I have something I want to ask you.”

“What is it?”

“The place called the Temple....do the warriors there use cultivation techniques and have schools and sects?”

For there to not be a strongest army but a strongest warrior.

Wasn’t that a line that was used in novels.

Cuchulainn opened his eyes widely at Tae Ho’s question and answered.

“Uh, yes. They did use a peculiar strength called energy. They also had a secret art to gain eternal life.”

Cuchulainn looked at a distant place as if he was remembering the past and continued speaking.

“When I fought in the Great War, there was someone called the Sword King of the Vast Sky that battled alongside me. The temple is a place that is closer to Asgard rather than Erin.....a world where Gods and warriors exist, and he said that the warriors used energy and the Gods used supernatural arts. He also said that there was an organization comparable to our knights.”

Tae Ho felt like he was now completely certain of it. He then decided to put a wedge in it.

“I’m saying just in case, but isn’t the strongest warrior a pegasus?”

“Oh, how did you know? Did Ragnar tell you?”

“Indeed.”

So the Temple was eastern mythology.

Asgard was a myth of Scandinavia, Erin from Britain and Ireland, and Olympus from Greece and Rome. So it was kind of right.

‘There should be many people with similar names to mine in the Temple.’

He felt like he could understand why Bjorn had talked about the Temple when Tae Ho had first entered Valhalla.

Tae Ho cleared his curiousness to a certain extent and then sat on the ground. After some more time, he wanted to lie down, and Tae Ho didn’t hold back the urge.

“Why, did you get exhausted?”

Cuchulainn looked down on the lying Tae Ho and said.

It was quite understandable for him to have grown exhausted, as the battle against Ferdia mac Daman had lasted for several hours this time.

Tae Ho looked back at him as if there really was a need to ask and then placed his hand on his stomach.

The Tower of Shadows was a mental place. As such, there was no need to eat, and one didn't get exhausted no matter how hard they exercised.

Still, Tae Ho wanted to eat food. Precisely speaking, he wanted Heda's food.

"I want to see Heda."

Cuchulainn smirked as Tae Ho mumbled unconsciously.

Tae Ho had been climbing the tower for a year and three months already. Compared to Cuchulainn, who could go out of the tower to meet Scathach, Tae Ho could only remain in the tower. So the time he spent in the tower was the time he hadn't been able to see Heda.

"Shall we go out now?"

As Cuchulainn sat on the ground and asked, Tae Ho shook his head immediately.

"Ey, we still have to go a bit more. We are merely at the eleventh floor."

"Venomous bastard."

This time, his tone was closer to a curse compared to before.

"But it is really marvelous. It doesn't seem a lie that you want to meet Heda, so how are you able to endure this well? Normally, you go crazy because you want to go out. It was the same for me."

Of course, compared to the others, Tae Ho had Cuchulainn to converse with.

But even if that were the case, Tae Ho was enduring too well.

Tae Ho had died more than a thousand times the past year and three months. It was easy to say, but he had died a thousand times. This meant that Tae Ho experienced death at least twice a day on average.

It wasn't easy to endure this even if one knew it wasn't real death. Tae Ho would have already gone crazy if he was a normal person as even the pain was real.

Tae Ho scratched his chin as if Cuchulainn's question was hard to answer and then said, "Well, what can I say.....should I call it an instinct to conquer? Like I have to beat it? And even more when I'm given floors like this."

Beat the first floor to go to the second. Beat the second and go to the third.

A famous mountain climber had said this.

That he climbed mountains because they were there.

It was the same. He would climb the tower because it was there. He would conquer it as he had something to conquer.

Tae Ho hadn't been the best professional gamer in the world for nothing.

Cuchulainn listened to Tae Ho's excuse and then shook his head as if it was hard to understand. He then spoke again.

"Anyways, for how long are you going to stay here? Are you saying that you will stay for a hundred, no, a thousand years more? I can't wait for you that long. Don't blame me if I go out first."

"Ey, i'm not planning on conquering it until the end, only."

"Only?"

"I'm also not planning on staying too long either."

Because he really wanted to see Heda.

Time was still flowing outside, albeit slower than in the Tower of Shadows.

It took a year and three months to climb to the eleventh floor.

And he wasn't planning on changing his conquering method now.

He was planning on clearing it repeatedly.

But wasn't planning on staying for too long either.

Tae Ho rose up.

He looked at the ceiling and said,

“I'm planning on climbing it a bit faster from now on.”

A contradictory statement, but Tae Ho spoke like that.

And that happened for real.

—

[Idun's Valkyrie]

[Scathach]

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (6) > End

Episode 32/Chapter 7: The land of darkness

(7)

The sun set and rose up again.

They were still small and cute, but Rolo's offspring had started to look more like gryphons, Adenmaha, who was playing with them, raised their heads to check the location of the sun. It was now time to enter the cave of Scathach.

It had already been a few months since she had started to learn the mystical powers of the Tuatha De Danann instead of Tae Ho.

Adenmaha had become more knowledgeable in the several magics thanks to Scathach's classes, but her steps towards Scathach's cave were always heavy.

But it was different now.

Adenmaha hummed and left Rolo's nest, and Rolo's wives Ferrari and Benz looked at Rolo as if to inquire on what was happening.

'It seems like noonim has reached the boundary where she can enjoy things.'

Didn't they say that if one couldn't dodge it, they should just enjoy it?

Ferrari and Benz praised Rolo as being outstanding because of his guess, and the chirping chicks also chirped even harder.

'Hoho, this is the way you should be living.'

His master was training or something and wasn't even calling him.

Rolo looked at his fox-like wives and his rabbit-like children and put on a proud face.

But the happy times of Rolo were also coming to an end.

In addition to that, his guess about Adenmaha was also wrong.

The reason Adenmaha hummed and headed towards Scathach's cave wasn't because she had developed into a masochist as expected of a Valkyrie of Idun's legion(?) and started to enjoy her lessons.

It was the twentieth day since Tae Ho entered the Tower of Shadows.

Cuchulainn had told her when he got out of tower for a moment.

That Tae Ho would be getting out of the tower today.

“Hehehe.”

The reason she was happy wasn't only because Tae Ho was going to get out.

It was because Tae Ho had successfully cleared the assignment that evil witch Scathach had given him, and a really good thing happened.

[Idun's Valkyrie]

[Scathach]

Of course, Adenmaha didn't have the 'Eyes of the Dragon' and she couldn't see the green words.

But she felt like she could sense the letters above Scathach's head, who was sitting with a casual expression.

“You came?”

“Yes, I did.”

Adenmaha raised her chin and answered briefly.

Scathach, that was reading a book in her chair, opened her eyes sharply and Adenmaha gulped dry saliva.

‘It's a battle of spirit! You can't lose!’

Adenmaha determined herself and maintained a calm expression while hiding that her heart beat had increased.

Scathach smirked.

“Your words have shortened once again.”

“Hmph, that’s because I’m now your senio…….Uak!”

Adenmaha fell to the ground. She collapsed while not being able to finish her words and screamed and Scathach, who’d pinned down Adenmaha in an instant, twisted her arm roughly and asked, “Senior what?”

“Senior Valkyrie! Senior!”

Adenmaha yelled hurriedly with a red face.

Just like how the ocean had an upper and lower region, there were also seniors and juniors between Valkyries of a legion. Although you didn’t have the right to order others just because you were seniors, juniors still had to respect them.

However, Scathach pretended not to have heard Adenmaha’s cry and tilted her head.

“Sen……what?”

It was a lie. There was no way she didn’t hear that.

Adenmaha tried to use a more effective attack instead of transforming recklessly like the last time.

“I-I will tell master!”

As Tae Ho was the commander of the legion, it could be said that he had a higher position than the Valkyries. However, Scathach didn’t mind that.

“He’s still my disciple.”

“Akk!”

Adenmaha let out a cry once again, but Scathach still didn’t budge. She rather twisted Adenmaha’s arm more harshly and said with a low voice.

“Once a master?”

“A-Always a master!”

“It’s enough if you know that.”

Scathach put down Adenmaha’s wrist and then sat on the chair once again. She didn’t shed even a drop of sweat even though she’d moved so rashly.

On the other hand, Adenmaha had become a mess. She sobbed sorrowfully like a damsel in distress while being on the floor and mumbled in a low voice, “Sob sob, the legion is flowing backwards.”

Scathach turned to look at Adenmaha once again and she flinched. She had said it for her to hear it, but was it too loud? Did she have to say it a bit lower?

Scathach looked at the flinching Adenmaha and then clicked her tongue and pointed the side next to hers with her chin.

“Wipe off your tears and sit over here. It’s almost time for him to wake up. You wouldn’t want to face him while looking like that, right?”

Today was a good day.

One of the reasons for that had gone out the window, but there was still the other reason.

Adenmaha determined herself and then wiped off her tears to sit next to Scathach. There was a big platform next to the two people where Tae Ho was lying.

There was a time difference of thirty times between the world Tae Ho was at and the world Adenmaha was at. Because of that, not even Scathach could determine exactly when Tae Ho would wake up.

Scathach started to read the book again and waited patiently, and Adenmaha rolled her feet while sitting down and waited for Tae Ho to wake up.

And about ten minutes later—

Tae Ho opened his eyes.

“Heda.”

The first thing he called out when he woke up was the name of Heda.

Scathach smiled as if it was absurd and then said, “You really have your priorities set straight.”

It really was the case. Adenmaha pouted her lips once and then stood up and approached Tae Ho. It was an elegant walking that wasn’t in a rush.

“Adenmaha?”

“Did you return?”

As Adenmaha spoke with a well-mannered expression, Tae Ho rose his upper body and blinked. He then stood up and embraced Adenmaha.

“Adenmaha!”

“Kyak?”

Whether the surprised Adenmaha screamed or not, Tae Ho still put more strength in his two arms.

It had only been twenty two days in Adenmaha’s point of view but it had been two years for Tae Ho.

It would be a lie if he didn’t want to see her.

“I-It’s- hmph.”

Adenmaha mumbled from Tae Ho’s embrace. Tae Ho laughed as if this kind of reaction was also good and then looked in front of him.

“Are you back?”

“I am.”

“There was some progress indeed.”

Scathach put on a satisfied face and looked at Tae Ho from head to toe. His looks hadn't changed, but Scathach could know.

Tae Ho's spirit had also changed. The sentence of the Milesians was also emanating a strength so strong it couldn't even be compared to before.

“So you climbed up to the thirty seventh floor right?”

“Yes. I learned all the basic techniques of Scathach's style.”

Seven months to reach the eleventh floor.

Tae Ho had climbed up to the thirty seventh, and there were really few people that had climbed up to that floor in only two years.

In addition, Tae Ho hadn't just ascended once. He had cleared the floors several times with the various types of weapons he possessed.

‘He may have set up a new record if he had climbed normally.’

Cuchulainn manifested next to Tae Ho and sent a message magic so only Scathach could hear it, and Scathach answered with a smile from her eyes.

In the other hand, Tae Ho activated the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’ out of habit as he hadn't returned to reality for a long while.

“Uh, Scathach-nim?”

“Right. I became a Valkyrie of Idun's legion just like I promised.”

Tae Ho had successfully cleared the assignment Scathach had given him.

Idun requested Scathach to train the warriors in her legion, and Scathach gladly agreed to it.

Training talented warriors and turning them into heroes was one of her joys.

Having entered Valhalla was already proving the greatness of a warrior, so for Scathach, it was like having entered a theme park with various kinds of rides.

“She’s my junior, my junior. I am the senior here.”

Adenmaha whispered in a really low voice from Tae Ho’s embrace. Tae Ho laughed like Bracky and then released Adenmaha.

“Warrior Tae Ho, it’s a meeting.”

Scathach said suddenly.

And then, that became a formality.

Scathach approached Tae Ho and he lowered his posture like he did with Idun. Scathach’s lips reached Tae Ho’s forehead.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

A blessing from a Valkyrie.

Tae Ho could sense a change in his saga.

The name of a new Valkyrie was recorded in the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’.

[Scathach]

The Queen of the Land of Darkness. The teacher of the great heroes.

‘I should organize it a bit’

Because he could only register up to nine names in the saga.

If he didn’t clear a spot, Scathach’s name would disappear. Because of that, Tae Ho quickly reviewed the list of Valkyries.

[Idun’s Valkyrie] : [Heda] [Adenmaha] [Scathach]

[Odin’s Valkyrie] : [Rasgrid]

[Tir’s Valkyrie] : [Reginleif]

[Tir’s Valkyrie] : [Gandur]

[Ullr's Valkyrie] : [Ingrid]

[Njord's Valkyrie] : [Kaldea]

[Valkyrie Lord] : [Freya]

First, he erased the name of Hildegarde to make a spot for Scathach, as the completion rate was low and he thought he wouldn't see her much.

‘Should it be better to swap Kaldea for Sigrun or Gudrun?’

Tae Ho hadn't met them yet, but had heard their names and knew their existences through the things he had heard from Cuchulainn.

Just looking at the performances of the Valkyries, he had to choose Kaldea without even thinking about it as it wasn't proper to compare a veteran Valkyrie to the two that had just become so.

But the story changed if he took the completion rate into account.

The number of blessings and the type of relationship influenced the completion rate, so it would be better to complete it with a Valkyrie that lived in the same residence as him instead of a Valkyrie of another legion he wouldn't be seeing much.

‘Who should I take out?’

Even if he did take out Kaldea from the list, there was one spot lacking.

‘Do I have to take out Rasgrid or Reginleif.....’

The two of them were outstanding Valkyries, but their completion rate was lower than the other Valkyries and he even met her few times.

‘Ingrid has a high completion rate, and I think that I will be seeing Gandur a lot because of Siri.’

Ingrid was the one that had the highest completion rate after to

Heda because of the time they had been together in Midgard. It seemed like it would change soon as Adenmaha was increasing at a frightening pace, but even if that were the case, she had the third highest completion rate.

‘Actually, just looking at the completion rates, I should take out Freya.’

Because he could meet the other Valkyries in the battlefield, but he almost certainly couldn’t meet a Goddess.

From a different perspective, he may be able to tell her to help him on strengthening his saga just like he did so for the other Valkyries, but he was talking to none other than Freya. It was doubtful whether she would agree to it or not and may even order him to remove her from the list as it was impertinent.

‘But it’s still regretful.’

The Goddess of Magic and Beauty and the second most beautiful-no, besides that, a strong Goddess that had light emanating from her.

He may be seeing her more than he thought as he had become a commander now. If he accumulated the blessings slowly, she would surely become a reliable force.

‘Good, let’s think of the other things at a later time.’

Tae Ho finished reviewing the list in a short time and then looked downwards. Adenmaha was struggling on her toes to give him a blessing.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

Adenmaha barely managed to bless him and then smiled brightly and said something. However Tae Ho turned his head reflexively. It was because a familiar sound of foot step was heard.

“Pant, pa.....”

Her breath was rough maybe because she came running to this place. When Heda reached the residence of Scathach, she took a breath and collected herself with a bright smile.

“Hello once aga.....Tae Ho?!”

She couldn't finish her words. It was because Tae Ho closed the distance in an instant and then grabbed her waist and kissed her.

Heda tried to push Tae Ho because there were many eyes looking them, but he didn't even budge.

It had only been twenty two days for Heda, but two long and gruelling years had gone by for Tae Ho. He couldn't let go of her.

And in the end, Heda also received him. Adenmaha pouted, Cuchulainn sent a lukewarm gaze, and Scathach smiled.

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

The completion percentage of Heda's clone increased yet again.

—

“It was a really busy day.”

Heda said when she exited out of the cave.

Tae Ho wasn't the only one to have returned. The lowest-ranked warriors of Idun's legion that had gone out on their first expedition with Sigrun were returning as well.

“Fortunately, there don't seem to be any deaths.”

“They would have grown a bit more if they had accumulated runes.”

Adenmaha and Scathach, that were following from behind, offered their respective opinions.

Heda laughed and spoke.

“I was preparing food with Gudrun. We have to open a party that

doesn't fall behind to the night banquet."

There were now more than twenty people in Idun's residence. It wasn't an easy thing for two people to prepare all the food alone, but it seemed like Heda enjoyed even that.

Because it had been a really long time since Idun's legion was this lively.

"A ship is coming."

Scathach looked at a distant place as soon as they reached the dock and said. Adenmaha frowned as if she couldn't see well, but Tae Ho could see the green words that were approaching.

"Let's go greet Idun-nim after the party ends."

Heda said in a low voice while looking beyond the dock with a proud face. Tae Ho has been staying in the residence until now, but looking at it in another way, he had gone to a far away place and just returned. So receiving an audience with her was only proper.

Tae Ho nodded immediately as he wanted to see Idun almost as much as Heda. He then looked at the green words approaching and said, "Um, Heda."

"Yes?"

"Um....."

"Um?"

"Did you go to meet them?"

Because the new warriors also belonged to Idun's legion.

Heda opened her eyes widely at Tae Ho's question and then laughed merrily. She opened her eyes sharply and said playfully, "I wonder? What do you think?"

'Tch tch, you have already lost since you asked.'

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue as if Tae Ho still had a long way to go. Meanwhile, people approached Tae Ho. Their faces were a

welcome sight.

“My king.”

“It has been a while. You’ve changed a lot in three weeks.”

“Merlin. Master Ragnar. It’s great to see both of you.”

It seemed like Merlin had gotten quite accustomed to the residence while Tae Ho wasn’t around. He seemed as relaxed as a person in his hometown.

“Siri said that she would be coming later.”

Adenmaha added. It really was a gathering of the family of Idun’s legion. The first after a really long while.

The big warship reached the dock. Rolo and his wives brought his babies, and McLaren also showed his face with a healthy visage.

“For Idun!”

“For Idun!”

As the warriors that had remained in the residence yelled, the warriors that jumped down from the ship also yelled.

“Valkyrie Sigrun greets the commander.”

“Valkyrie Gudrun greets the commander.”

Sigrun and Gudrun hit their chests twice and expressed etiquette towards Tae Ho.

Tae Ho also expressed his manners and the banquet Heda had prepared started.

An indeterminate amount of time soon passed.

Not long after everyone got settled, Siri joined the banquet just like Adenmaha had said.

There was then one more person that reached the dock of Idun’s legion.

It wasn’t a wooden boat but a swan. As soon as she landed on the

ground, the swan that had transformed into a black-haired Valkyrie passed the warriors confidently and stood in front of Tae Ho.

“Hildegarde.”

“Valkyrie Hildegarde greets the commander of Idun.”

Hildegarde expressed etiquette and gave a blessing on Tae Ho’s forehead. Heda looked at that and then frowned and asked, “Hildegarde, why have you come here?”

Because she hadn’t heard that Hildegarde would be visiting. In addition, it was in the middle of the night.

As Heda asked with a wary expression, Hildegarde looked at Tae Ho once again and said, “Freya-nim is calling the commander of Idun.”

The Goddess of Magic and Beauty, Freya, who commands all the Valkyries in Valhalla. Why was that Goddess summoning Tae Ho?

Tae Ho and Heda turned to look at each other as neither could come up with an answer.

< Episode 32 – The land of darkness (7) > End

Episode 33/Chapter 1: Idun's warrior (1)

Valhalla, the holy land for warriors, was divided in several sectors.

The central hall had the space door that connected the several places of Midgard.

The amusement center of the warriors, Anaheim.

The smithy where the dwarf masters gathered and created several weapons for the warriors of Valhalla.

The fog lake that had the residences of the legions that had the shape of islands.

The holy door Valgrind, for the warriors to be dispatched at.

The great banquet room that could hold all the warriors of Valhalla.

The lowest-ranked warriors that had just entered Valhalla didn't have much doubts of it, but the warriors with experience could only grow doubtful about the structure of Valhalla.

The reason was simple, for a residence of the Gods didn't exist at all.

Excluding some special Gods that were in charge of their legion, most of them didn't live in the residences.

Because of that, the lowest-ranked warriors simply thought that there may be a palace for the Gods somewhere in Valhalla.

However, no such residence for the Gods existed.

The Gods that were in charge of their legions were residents of Asgard before being the owners of Valhalla. One could say that the entirety of Valhalla was their palace.

The palace of the God of Thunder, Thor, Bilskirnir, was located in the north of Valhalla, and it was the most majestic and

grandiose building among all the ones that existed in Valhalla.

Thor's palace wasn't located in Thor's residence but in a different place, and the reason for this was because his palace also acted as the treasure vault for Valhalla.

The fortress of Heimdal, which guarded the entrance to the Bifrost, was quite far away from Valhalla.

However, one could say that it was also part of Valhalla, as it was connected with a long bridge that warriors could cross.

The residence of Freya, Folkvangr, was located in the middle of the fog lake.

Folkvangr, which was called the plain of battles, was wider than any other residence, but unlike Thor's, it was inside her territory.

The reason it was located in the center of the fog lake was because it had a much more important role than Odin's residence.

The owner of Valhalla, Odin, was the God who commanded all the warriors of Valhalla.

It was by his authority that the place, time, and manner of a battle was decided.

But Valhalla was the place the warriors stayed at and not the place they faced their enemies. So naturally, Odin's authority was displayed more outside of Valhalla. Subsequently, it was Odin's role to decide the things that happened outside of Valhalla.

The ones that were in charge of what happened inside of Valhalla wasn't Odin but Freya and her Valkyries.

Because of that, it was a natural thing for her residence to be located in the middle of the fog lake so that she could influence all of the legions surrounding it.

"The Goddess is waiting for you. Let's hurry."

Hildegarde urged Tae Ho. As she knew that Tae Ho had the Hawk Wing Coat, she said that there was no need to ride on a ship and

they should just fly over the Freya's residence, but Heda dismissed this.

"It's a visit by a commander, and as it's late in the night, I think that there's more need to keep with the procedures."

Hildegarde didn't have anything to rebuke with as Heda spoke her argument with eyes filled with vigilance.

She could only get on a boat as Heda had proposed.

The ones that got on the wooden boat Heda drove were Tae Ho, Hildegarde, and Adenmaha.

In the case of Adenmaha, she was just blinking because she wanted to go but had particularly no reason to. Unexpectedly, Heda had 'ordered' her to go too.

Heda was the representative Valkyrie indeed, but she didn't particularly order her Valkyries. Even Adenmaha, who'd just been ordered, merely did favors, and as it was the first time she received an order, she put on a bewildered look.

'Heda is really on her guard. Is she more cautious of Freya than Hildegarde?'

Cuchulainn said in a low voice. Tae Ho gripped Gae Bolg while sitting next to Heda and whispered in a really low voice.

'Um, but it still feels quite good.'

He also felt that Heda was being jealous.

'Are you open-minded or just simple?'

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue; however, he didn't think of this situation to be too serious.

He must have gotten called because Freya had business with him, and there was a really low probability for her to harm Tae Ho and Heda.

Freya wasn't simply a beautiful woman. She was the one that

administered all of Valhalla instead of Odin and could be said to be the real owner of Valhalla.

She did show a childish side at times, but she was an undeniably wise and clear Goddess.

She had had her own reasons when she met Tae Ho until now, so there would also be one this time.

Heda drove the wooden boat while standing, while Tae Ho and Adenmaha sat calmly. Hildegarde looked at Heda and the direction the boat was going to while frowning.

Time flew by.

A really huge island started becoming visible from beyond the fog.

“It’s Folkvangr. The place where both Freya’s residence and the Valkyrie Training Center are at.”

Adenmaha’s eyes shone and showed a reaction at Hildegarde’s explanation rather than Tae Ho. It was because she was quite interested in the training center she had heard from Sigrun and Gudrun.

“Heda told me that she would send me to train when the legion gets stabilized.”

Adenmaha pulled on Tae Ho’s clothes and said in a low voice.

It was enough for her to learn from Heda as she was quite intelligent, but still, it was also good to experience it once.

But just like Adenmaha had said, it was impossible to do so right now because they didn’t know when Tae Ho may call Adenmaha.

When they hopped off the boat after it reached the dock, the Valkyries of Freya’s legion approached them as if they have been waiting.

“Greetings to the commander of Idun.”

The Valkyries hit their chests twice and then offered Tae Ho's group to ride a cat carriage.

‘It feels like animal abuse.’

Because the cat carriage was really being pulled by a sort of feline.

The carriage that looked like a sleigh had about ten cats in front of it.

Tae Ho agreed to Cuchulainn's words and got on the carriage. When Heda and Adenmaha also got on the carriage, Hildegarde boarded last and swung a willow branch to depart the cats.

It was doubtful if the cats would be able to pull the carriage, but it seemed like they weren't normal cats. The carriage started to move much faster than an average one and then floated into the air and aimed for the sky.

“The white palace you see over there is Sessrumnir.”

It was a palace that had quite the difficult pronunciation.

The residence of Freya was quite a distance away from the training center of the Valkyries and the lodging of the warriors.

The palace of Freya was wide rather than high, and it looked similar to the palace of Versailles of France.

Hildegarde made the carriage stop in front of the main gates and then looked at Tae Ho and Heda at the same time and said,

“The only one that can enter is Idun's commander.”

“I know. Be careful.”

She said the first part to Hildegarde and the last part was directed towards Tae Ho.

It seemed like it was a certain rule that was established rather than favoring Freya. Heda just frowned and didn't say anything else. Adenmaha looked at Heda and told Tae Ho to have a safe trip.

“I will be going then.”

“Be careful.”

Tae Ho said his farewell to Adenmaha, who was waving her hand, and Heda, who was looking at him worriedly, and then followed Hildegarde inside of the palace of Freya.

‘It feels warm and soft.’

Cuchulainn checked the insides of the palace and said in a low voice. Everywhere Tae Ho looked was white, but it was a warm white instead of a cold one. It reminded Tae Ho of a sun-dried blanket and pillow.

In addition, as there were white cats rolling inside of the palace, one could only feel fluffy.

After he stepped on the red and comfy carpet, a long staircase that led to the second floor appeared. After climbing each floor, a big room that was guarded by Valkyries appeared.

“The commander of Idun has arrived.”

“Let him in.”

As the Valkyrie that was next to the door spoke, an answer from Freya came back from inside the room. Tae Ho ended up laughing as he had seen this scene several times in historical plays.

“Let’s enter.”

Hildegarde stopped right in front of the open doors as if she would accompany him up to here and said. Tae Ho greeted her with his eyes and then entered the room.

“The commander of Idun greets the Goddess of Magic and Beauty.”

Freya was half lying in a big throne that looked like a bed rather than a chair.

As Tae Ho lowered his posture to express etiquette to Freya just

like he did so with Idun, Freya laughed and received his greeting.

“Your greeting has become quite good. It feels like you got accust.....huh?”

Freya, in the middle of complimenting Tae Ho, paused her words and frowned. She rose up and then checked on Tae Ho with her sharp eyes.

“You’ve changed quite a lot in only twenty days. Did Ragnar use magic on you?”

It was the sharp observation of the commander of the Valkyries. Tae Ho grew amazed inwardly and said briefly,

“I just trained hard.”

“Hm really? Ragnar indeed. How amazing.”

‘Hey, say that the amazing one is master quickly. Huh?’

The last one that urged him was Cuchulainn. Tae Ho pretended not to have heard it as he was in front of Freya, but it wasn’t possible. Rather than Cuchulainn, Freya was the problem.

“Gae Bolg, the spear of Cuchulainn. It seems like there’s a bit of his soul in it.”

She was the Goddess of Magic and this place was her magical region. It would be weirder for her to not notice Cuchulainn.

“Beautiful Prince of Light, it’s nice to meet you again.”

When Freya waved her hand, Cuchulainn materialized next to Tae Ho akin to the scene in the residence of Scathach.

Cuchulainn smiled bitterly and then hit his chest to express etiquette.

“Nice to meet you. You are still pretty, although you come after master.”

“Just like birds of the same flock. Both of your eyes are twisted.”

Freya answered with a discomforted voice at Cuchulainn’s

greeting, but her eyes were smiling. It seemed like she was happy that she was able to face Cuchulainn.

“I can now understand. You have Ragnar and also Cuchulainn. I also heard that Scathach is staying in your residence....And even Merlin was added? It’s a really flashy composition.”

The number of the members of the legion was low, but it was a line up that wouldn’t fall behind any other legion.

Freya looked at Cuchulainn with affectionate eyes for a moment and then fixed her posture to say,

“I should tell you the reason I have called you. The reason is because I have something to entrust you with.”

The distance between Tae Ho and Freya shortened. It wasn’t that Tae Ho had approached Freya, but the distance between them had just closed.

The result of having gotten closer while omitting the process was really marvelous but Tae Ho just thought it as being on top of a moving floor.

Freya showed a disappointed look as Tae Ho didn’t get that surprised but then continued speaking.

“If it’s you, who has already gone to Midgard several times, you should know that the state and the effects of the Great Barrier are not clear. We also talked about this in the great conference.”

Could they keep believing in the Great Barrier like this? Weren’t the defects increasing?

“It hasn’t been revealed publicly.....but we are planning on installing the Great Barrier once again completely.”

Freya lowered her voice and then ordered Tae Ho to get closer. When the distance between the two of them became three steps, Freya said while blushing a bit.

“Installing the Great Barrier again isn’t a normal thing. In

addition, it's a sudden installation that hasn't been planned. Because of that...it's a bit embarrassing to say this, but we are lacking strength."

It was understandable as it was a Great Barrier that protected all of Midgard. And just like Freya had said, it was decided too suddenly.

Tae Ho frowned unconsciously. He did understand Freya's words, but he was curious as to where he could be put in that story.

Freya read Tae Ho's expression and then clicked her tongue.

"Don't worry. I'm not telling you to use magic."

If that really was the case, she would have called Scathach instead.

"What I want to entrust you with is to go to Vanaheim to get the materials we need to install the Great Barrier."

"Are you talking about the land of the Vanir?"

"Right. It's the land of my father, my brother, and I that we long for. I don't know if you know this, but most of the magic of Asgard originated from Vanaheim. I am a body that was dispatched to teach magic to the Aesir."

If one went deeper into the matter, the Vanir had sent Freya as a hostage after they'd been defeated in the war against the Aesir, but there was no need to speak about that.

Freya spoke once again as the silent Tae Ho nodded.

"The reason we are sending you instead of the Valkyries is because this matter is that important. What you will be bringing from Vanaheim isn't simply a magical book or tool. It's a really precious item, even in Vanaheim. Appropriately, we have to send someone that's at least a commander, and the one that has the most free time among the ones I know is you."

It didn't mean that Tae Ho had free time.

Normally, the commanders acted together with their legions. But the situation of Idun's legion, which Tae Ho belonged to, was different. Excluding Tae Ho, all the others were lowest-ranked warriors, and that number was only in the tens.

Because of that, Tae Ho could only act alone so naturally he had more freedom than the other commanders.

"In addition, you should already know this, but Vanaheim isn't a place you can come and go freely through a space door like Svartalfheim or Nidavelir. The existence of an escort is indispensable....what are those eyes? Don't tell me you don't know what I'm talking about."

Tae Ho nodded honestly. There was no way he would know about Vanaheim when he didn't even have the basic knowledge.

However, Freya frowned in disapproval.

"Really....what did Idun and Heda do without even teaching you this?"

She let out a sigh and said,

"It's too long for me to explain everything, so get more information from Hildegard. There's a need for you to know about the structure of Asgard and other realms as you are a commander now."

"I will take it into account."

"Right. Thank you for answering me freshly. Also.....I'm sorry that I called you in the middle of the night, but I hope you can depart immediately. I hope you understand, as it's a really important matter."

"It's fine."

"Thank you once again. If you have something besides the reward, you can just tell me. I will listen to you if it's in my

power.”

Everything had to have a price corresponding to it.

Tae Ho noticed Freya’s sincerity and then said in the end of his pondering,

“I want to receive Freya-nim’s blessing after and before I finish the task.”

“My blessing?”

“Yes, I want your blessing.”

Tae Ho said with craving eyes and Freya tilted her head as if it was unexpected but then put on a smile.

“Hm, right. So that’s what you want? Well, now we are being reasonable.”

It was time for Tae Ho’s bean chaff to get off as he had kept facing Freya’s shining beauty repeatedly.

Freya smiled joyfully and then made a gesture with her hand to Tae Ho to get closer. It really was to bless him.

But it was when Tae Ho lowered his posture in front of Freya, she opened her eyes sharply and said,

“What is this? It feels like you are planning something.”

Tae Ho flinched but spoke with desiring eyes.

“That’s not true. I just want to receive your blessing.”

“Suspicious.”

Freya’s eyes became even sharper.

But it only lasted for a moment. Freya shrugged her shoulders and then stood up from her seat.

“Well, it’s not that I can’t do it.”

She spoke briefly and then made Tae Ho raise his head and kissed him. The blessing that had the biggest effect among the Valkyries

was a blessing on the lips.

Cuchulainn whistled and Tae Ho forced himself to act calm. Freya giggled and then touched Tae Ho's cheek.

“Go, Idun's commander. Hildegarde will be the one to tell you the details.”

Freya spoke refreshingly and then sat on the throne once again and laughed. Tae Ho could understand why Freya was enjoying it so much after he got out of the room.

—

“So that was the case. You just wanted to strengthen your saga. The reason you smiled like a fool is also because your saga got strengthened, not because of another reason.”

“So that was the case.”

Heda and Adenmaha looked at Tae Ho with the same eyes. It was because they had watched Freya giving him the blessing in a live broadcast.

‘Hey! At times like this, you just have to come out shamelessly.’

Tae Ho ignored Cuchulainn's baseless advice and then Hildegarde approached him with an enjoying face.

“I will be leading the commander of Idun to Vanaheim.”

There were two Valkyries of Freya's legion and twenty shield maidens behind Hildegarde.

It seemed like it was because there were many Valkyries, but Freya's legion had many more females compared to the other legions.

Heda was another case, but when even Adenmaha's eyes grew chilly, Tae Ho thought of another thing.

‘Did I erase Hildegarde for nothing?’

As soon as he erased her name, an opportunity to receive her

blessing several times had appeared.

Hildegarde was quite a strong Valkyrie. Just by looking at the performance as a Valkyrie, she was comparable to Reginleif.

But Tae Ho shook his head.

If he decided on a path, he should keep going by it. He would only suffer more damages if he couldn't decide.

Compared to Adenmaha, Heda, who knew what Tae Ho was thinking about clearly, let out a sigh and then grabbed on Adenmaha's arm and said,

"I will entrust Tae Ho to you, Adenmaha."

"Leave it to me. I will be watching him closely."

The representative Valkyrie couldn't follow Tae Ho outside. In the first place, the reason Heda brought Adenmaha was because she had been expecting something like this to happen.

'But for them to install the Great Barrier again at this point.....Is the situation more serious than I thought.....'

To install the Great Barrier anew, they had to remove the existing barrier once. So that meant that Midgard would be exposed to the giants at that moment.

Of course, Odin and Freya wouldn't just remove the barrier. He was sure they had their own preparations.

Regardless, he couldn't help but worry.

A hundred years since the Great War.

Many interesting events had been occurring recently. Perhaps, the time for a change had come.

"Heda."

Heda raised her head when she was called and then fixed her expression. She shook her head at Tae Ho whose eyes were filled with worry.

Hildegarde led the warriors and got on the ship of Freya's legion. Heda allowed Adenmaha on the ship first and then gave Tae Ho the best blessing.

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

The ship of Freya's legion left the dock with Heda watching from on.

It went towards Vanaheim, the land of the Vanir.

< Episode 33 – Idun's sword (1) > End

Episode 33/Chapter 2: Idun's warrior (2)

The Drakkars, the ships of Freya's legion, were some of the most common viking ships seen around.

This ship, which could also be called a long ship, had a really drawn out shape but was light and stable, so its mobility was quite excellent.

The warriors of Freya's legion were at their posts after spreading the sail. Being able to stir the oars so that one could move when things didn't go as expected was one of the strong points of a Drakkar.

As it were, the ship wasn't one commonly powered by sail and oars as it belonged to Freya's legion. Adenmaha pointed the blue sail and said in a low voice,

“There's wind magic casted in it.”

It was a magical sail that could control the wind hitting it freely, be it strong or soft.

As the Drakkars were single floor ships, they didn't possess cabins or a storage.

It seemed like the curtain installed in the rear of the boat was acting as both the cabins and the storage.

“We have prepared a place for commander-nim at the innermost side of inside the curtain. You can rest there at night.”

Tae Ho nodded suitably. What Tae Ho was riding right now was a war ship, and in addition, the warriors of Valhalla were all people accustomed to living on ships. Getting angry because a separate, luxurious cabin wasn't prepared was something lacking common sense.

‘Right. Since when did you mind those things? It's enough with having a place to lie down. In addition, isn't that place really good?

You are the only male on this vessel, but there are no walls.'

Cuchulainn spoke while laughing creepily.

Tae Ho lamented that this kind of man was the one called the Prince of Light and clicked his tongue, but he didn't say that he disliked it.

Tae Ho and Cuchulainn had gotten much closer while living in the Tower of Shadows for two years. So he was also accustomed to speaking about absurd things with him.

On the other hand, Hildegarde commanded the Valkyries and the warriors and increased the speed of the ship. It was so fast that the ship that was passing through the fog seemed like the slash of a sword.

"Commander of Idun, come over here. I will explain to you the objective of this trip and about the structure of Vanaheim and the realms."

Hildegarde had spoken in a friendly manner when she first met Tae Ho, but her words and attitude were now really polite as he was now a commander.

As most of the Valkyries he knew were related to him since he was a lowest-ranked warrior, this kind of treatment was really new.

'You are really enjoying this.'

Tae Ho ignored Cuchulainn's words and approached Hildegarde. She made Tae Ho and Adenmaha sit on some chairs that were prepared near the mast and started her explanation.

"Freya-nim has ordered me to explain everything from the basics. There should be many things you already know, but I hope you understand."

"It's good to do a review."

"I'm grateful that you speak like that."

Hildegarde smiled brightly and then produced a thin, wooden board made with wood from an ash tree on top of her thigh. There were many runes engraved on top of the wooden board, and when Hildegarde placed her hand on it, the runes started to shine.

“Just as you know, there originally existed ten realms, including Asgard, but one of them, Erin, was destroyed. Now there are only nine realms.”

Hildegarde’s voice was calm and soft. In addition, holograms started to form in the places her hands passed over. Tae Ho felt like he was in a planetarium.

“Our realm is called as Asgard, and there are several small worlds in it including Midgard.”

The holograms started to take shape.

The shapes and colors were a bit different, but they shared the same commonality that they were round and flat.

‘It’s marvelous even if I see it again.’

He had already heard an explanation of the composition of the worlds by Heda. At that time, he had also heard it while looking at the magic video made by Heda, but surprisingly enough, it wasn’t the earth shaped worlds that Tae Ho knew.

A round star planet located in space.

But this wasn’t the case in this world. It was a world with land that had sea surrounding it just like the people before the medieval age believed with elephants holding it up.

‘A fantasy indeed.’

In addition, that kind of land wasn’t only one. When the several round lands found their location, Hildegarde started to explain once again.

“The biggest land is this one, Midgard.”

Compared to the other lands, it was much bigger. There was sea

water falling down like endless waterfalls around the borders of that world.

“The ones at the right of Midgard are Svartalfheim and Nidavelir, and the one at its left is Alfheim.”

The characteristics of the two round lands were clear.

Svartalfheim, which Tae Ho was familiar with, shared half of its land with Nidavelir but there was no river or lake or even a sea like in Midgard.

The land of light fairies, Alfheim, had the shape of a big and shining island on top of a calm lake. It was really beautiful and emanated faint light while shining brightly simultaneously.

“Niflheim, also called the otherworld, is located under Midgard. Some call Niflheim as the underworld because of this structure.”

Niflheim was a bit smaller than Midgard, and it was a world that sun never shone on as Midgard was covering it from on top like a lid.

‘So that was the reason it was called the frost world.’

“The queen of Hell, Hela, who is located at the center of Niflheim, is loyal to Asgard unlike her father Loki or her brothers. Her army is the one that protects the outer areas of the several small worlds.”

Tae Ho remembered the soldiers of the otherworld that he saw in Black Fortress. They were existences that lived with worry and suffering and had no life compared to the warriors of Valhalla.

“Asgard is above Midgard.”

Asgard wasn't located at the center of Midgard but at the end of it.

As it was a land that humans couldn't reach and was much smaller than Midgard, the humans couldn't see Asgard directly.

“The thing that connects all of these small worlds is Yggdrasil,

the World Tree.”

When Hildegarde rolled her fingers, white light connected the worlds which she had explained.

“You could say that the World Tree, Yggdrasil, is the connector which binds the smaller worlds. The humans in Midgard just think of it as a big tree, but such a notion is only half right.”

Hildegarde now slid her finger from above to below, and a big tree that passed through Asgard, Midgard and Niflheim soon appeared.

“A huge tree that connects Midgard, Asgard, and Niflheim actually exists, but this is only a part of Yggdrasil that has been materialized.”

The lake of Mimir that Odin frequented or the nest of the evil dragon, Nidhogg, were near the root of Yggdrasil.

Erin had no small worlds in it compared to Asgard, so Adenmaha looked at the holograms with shining eyes. These were all things she already knew, but it was marvelous every time she saw it.

It seemed like Hildegarde enjoyed Adenmaha’s reaction, and she smiled and moved her hand. Promptly, a new land that was quite a distance away from the lands already revealed appeared.

“Vanaheim is located the farthest from Midgard among the smaller worlds. In addition, although it is connected with Yggdrasil, it’s connection is unstable compared to the other places. If we compare it to a sea route, you can say that it’s a harsh sea with a constant storm running through it.”

The light connecting Asgard and Vanaheim was really dull and faint.

“Because the connection is unstable, we aren’t able to approach it as easily through a space door as the other smaller worlds. If it deviates from the World Tree, we will become lost and will wander through the crevices of the world.”

It was the reason why Freya's legion was moving with a ship instead of a space door.

"But going over there through the water isn't easy either. It's because of the Sea of Ymir that is in the path to Vanaheim."

He did remember hearing it vaguely.

Tae Ho remembered the things he learnt from Heda when he was a lowest-ranked warrior and said,

"If you are talking about Ymir, he's the Giant of ancient times, right?"

"Yes. He was a giant among giants that was used as an ingredient by the Gods when making Midgard."

The birth of Midgard shared its story with the death of Ymir. It was because the King of Gods, Odin, and his brothers Vili and Ve defeated Ymir and used his corpse to create several places of Midgard.

"Just like you know, the evil spirits that appear in Midgard and the other worlds are existences born from the dirty blood of Ymir. A lot of his blood flows especially in Ymir's sea, so strong spirits that are called Ymir's shadows appear frequently."

Hildegarde spoke up to there and then paused for a moment and looked at the path of the ship. The ship shook and then the surrounding scene changed. The sky darkened and the fog grew denser. The weather was also much colder than before.

"We've entered the Sea of Ymir. This region is a place where strong spirits called the Kator reside, but one can say that it's a rather safe place to navigate."

"Why?"

Adenmaha blinked and asked. Hildegarde smiled once again at her eyes filled with curiousness and then said gently,

"It's because the appetite of the Kator is special."

When Hildegarde waved her hand once again, the small worlds disappeared and the shape of a black and evil spirit with the shape of a bee appeared.

“The Kators that look like huge bees feast on dragon races. They have no interest in the ones that aren’t dragons so you don’t have to wo....rry?”

The voice of Hildegarde, that was explaining, became a mess.

It wasn’t only because Adenmaha’s face paled when she heard that they liked to eat dragons.

Hildegarde stood up from her seat and the Valkyrie that was at the stern yelled,

“It’s the Kator! Get ready to fight!”

“H-How?!”

Hildegarde grew instantly bewildered, but it was an obvious reaction. It was because she didn’t know that Adenmaha was of the dragon race. For her, she was just a newcomer Valkyrie of Idun’s legion.

The warriors of Freya’s legion stood up and then pulled out their weapons. The sound of the wings made by the flock of bees was heard from far away.

Adenmaha panted and trembled, and even if that didn’t reveal her panic, her face was completely pale.

The shadows of Ymir weren’t normal spirits. It wasn’t excessive to say that they were born to devour dragons, so the aura they emanated was like a curse for dragons.

“They are coming from above! Get ready!”

“Shield wall!”

The warriors and the Valkyries yelled. The huge Kators that looked like wasps started to pour down like rain.

Adenmaha looked up the sky and stiffened. She knew that she had to use magic, but her body didn't follow her thoughts. She had overcome several battlefields, but she couldn't do anything this time.

One Kator fell down vertically. It was to stab Adenmaha with its poisonous needles that was like food emanating a sweet scent.

Adenmaha couldn't use her magic. She couldn't close her eyes nor scream.

Hildegarde gritted her teeth and raised her sword. But the Kators were too fast. The Kator's that fell down resembled lightning.

She would die.

Adenmaha thought like that. But at that moment, a hand grabbed Adenmaha's waist. It was a sword that was swung much faster than the sword of Hildegarde and much faster than the Kators.

The Kator that was falling down was split in two. It was bisected in a split second and fell to the sea on both sides of the ship.

Hildegarde opened her eyes widely. She couldn't open her mouth at the scene that happened in front of her eyes.

She couldn't see it.

How the attack was executed and when it started.

It was the same for Adenmaha. No, in the first place, she wasn't in a situation that she could mind over those things.

The fastest sword.

Tae Ho grabbed the sword Glass Bruyn, which he'd used to defeat the Killius that could call forth lightning, and looked down at Adenmaha. He put more strength in his arm holding her and said,

"Don't worry Adenmaha."

Tae Ho swung his sword once again. The sword aura that got

extended sharply split the body of another Kator in two.

It was the wind slash of Scathach's style techniques.

Tae Ho had changed in the Tower of Shadows over the past two years, and Adenmaha realized that truth. That he hadn't simply gotten strong.

Adenmaha felt out of breath for another reason and Tae Ho stabbed the wedge onto her heart.

“As I will protect you.”

—

‘Uwaaaaa! It gives me goosebumps. Goosebumps! As I will protect you, as I will protect you.... Uwaaa! Is this something that should be said by a human! My hands and feet are twisting! Spacetime is twisting up!’

Cuchulainn howled with a pained expression.

It didn't seem that it was to tease him but like he really was in pain.

The battle against that Kator didn't last for long. It was because the Kators were surprised by the overwhelming presence of Tae Ho and gave up and escaped.

However, Tae Ho's fight hadn't ended yet. His face flushed at Cuchulainn's fierce criticism, and he didn't know what to do.

He had said it without thinking much at the time, but he felt like it was really cheesy even if he thought about it.

“Ah, Adenmaha isn't saying anything.”

When he barely managed to say something, Cuchulainn snorted.

‘Of course she won't. Adenmaha won't.’

Because she is more in love than a certain someone.

Cuchulainn could feel like he could hear Adenmaha's heartbeat even when she was deep inside the room beyond the curtain.

‘Look at the reaction of the girls of Freya’s legion. Ha, I am more embarrassed than you.’

Tae Ho flinched and then glanced at his surroundings but unexpectedly enough, the gazes looking at Tae Ho were quite good. And some of them were even showing favor towards him openly.

“It’s fine?”

As Tae Ho counterattacked slightly after obtaining a bit of courage, Cuchulainn got bewildered, but it was only for a moment.

“Whew, do you know thanks to whom that it turned out like this? You should thank Master.’

Tae Ho just turned his head at the sudden change of attitude. It was because Hildegarde had returned after checking the state of the warriors.

She was looking at Tae Ho with eyes filled with interest just like when she first met him in the night banquet.

“I was sincerely impressed at the skills of Commander-nim.”

She had heard that Tae Ho was strong, but for him to possess a swordsmanship as strong as this.

It was possible for the warriors of Valhalla to become explosively stronger by accumulating runes in a short time thanks to the rune accumulation system, but but getting strong through the runes was merely for the basic abilities like the physical abilities or concentration.

It hasn’t been a year since Hildegarde brought Tae Ho to Valhalla, but for him to have sword techniques as outstanding as this. It really was something that couldn’t be imagined.

On the other hand, Tae Ho thought of a vague thing while Hildegarde was showing interest in him.

If it was just like he had heard in the night banquet, Tae Ho would have been able to become a warrior of Freya’s legion.

It was a family affair, but if that were the case, then the closest Valkyrie to Tae Ho would have become Hildegarde instead of Heda.

Of course, Tae Ho's imagination ended there. It was because he didn't want to imagine and couldn't imagine himself being at another legion aside of Idun's.

Idun, the Goddess of Life and Youth.

The gentle and affectionate Goddess of Tae Ho.

Now that he thought about it, the last time he'd seen her face was two years ago.

Two years ago.

Two years since he had an audience with Idun.

"Ah! Ahhh!"

Hildegarde got surprised and blinked her eyes as Tae Ho yelled inexplicably. It was the same for all the warriors and Valkyries in the ship.

However, Tae Ho couldn't mind their gazes.

"I forgot about it."

He had certainly decided to go meet her after the party ended.

He had gone to Freya's legion in the middle of the party and was going to Vanaheim after that.

So that meant that he had left without greeting Idun after having come out of the tower of shadow after two years.

'It's the end. The end! She will really sulk out now.'

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and spoke, enjoying the situation, and Tae Ho couldn't rebuke his words.

'Shall I not sleep today?'

Tae Ho grew afraid of sleeping. Precisely speaking, of dreaming.

—

The ship of Freya's legion flowed on the sea of Ymir.

A new thread of fate was made on the spinning wheel.

The oldest of the three sisters, Uld, spun the wheel. Verdandi, who represented the present, placed her slender fingers on top of the thread and read down the fate.

As the future wasn't set, not even the three sisters could read the threads of fate perfectly. They could just guess the future with the given information as the background just like Mimir did.

Skuld released the threads that had passed through the hands of Verdandi. She could only see an uneasy future no matter how many times she repeated it.

Midgard.

And Vanaheim.

Skuld, that was untying the threads, stood up from her seat. Uld and Verdandi didn't ask Skuld where she was going. It was because the future always worked as it pleased.

"Idun's warrior."

The things she had told Heda hadn't changed even now that quite a lot of time had passed.

A part of the threads of fate were still touching Idun's legion.

Skuld spoke in a low voice and got out of the residence of the three sisters. She used the swan wing coat she received as a Valkyrie and then transformed into a beautiful and white swan and flew to the sky.

It was towards Vanaheim.

< Episode 33 – Idun's sword (2) > End

Episode 33/Chapter 3: Idun's warrior (3)

The Sea of Ymir was very broad and complicated.

The sea that could be described as a vast expanse of water and the expression 'complicated' didn't seem to suit each other, but that was only when perceived through the eyes of an outsider.

There were many experienced sailors among the warriors of Valhalla. For them, who were accustomed to naval navigation, the complicated changes that were occurring below the surface of the water were seen clearly.

The fast but dangerous path, the slow but safe path, or other routes that held some dangers within but were relatively safe—there were various kinds of paths.

Hildegarde decided on the path they should take after thinking about it for a long time. Despite her precaution, unexpected occurrences could always take place. The turmoil between Adenmaha and the Kators was such an example.

For the newcomer Valkyrie of Idun's legion to be of a dragon race, it was a situation that was hard to guess, but it ended up happening anyways.

Hildegarde blamed herself for the incident. An accident had happened because of her not having investigated the group she traveling with.

Hildegarde apologized to Adenmaha and Tae Ho and then reviewed the remaining sea routes. As they were in a situation that necessitated haste, they had been forced to navigate the fast, dangerous path. Needless to say, the remainder of the trip probably wouldn't be easy either.

Still, Hildegarde decided to keep with the path they were on after pondering about it for a while. In her mind, there wouldn't be any more dangers now that she'd been made aware of any potential

threats from Tae Ho's and Adenmaha's presences.

But once again, there was nothing absolute in a trip in the sea.

After the third day since the group entered Ymir's sea, Hildegarde decided to change the difficulty of this trip greatly.

From a dangerous and hard trip to a comparatively easy one, that is.

The reason was simple.

“Idun's warrior!”

“Idun's warrior!”

“You are reeeaaally cool!”

“Too strong!”

The female warriors of Freya's legion exclaimed with really excited faces. There were admiration and joy mixed in their eyes.

That was the long and short of it.

Simply put, the commander of Idun was much stronger than what Hildegarde had thought.

But of course, she did know that he was strong. Because if he wasn't, he wouldn't have been able to become commander in the first place. He wouldn't have been able to accomplish his shining achievements in Midgard.

However, Hildegarde thought of different things.

Because whatever the case, he was still a warrior that had just become superior-ranked. He was a warrior that hadn't even been in Valhalla for a full year yet.

She had thought him far below the other commanders and considered the possibility that the legion had given him the title even though he lacked strength. He had certainly accomplished surprising things, but she had thought that it was the result of having received help from other warriors.

But that wasn't it either.

Idun's commander was strong, and in addition, the kind of strength and its shape was different to what Hildegarde had thought.

“Whew.”

Tae Ho heard the cheers of the warriors of Freya's legion and let out a long sigh. Cuchulainn said with a confused voice, ‘If others see you, they will think that you were the one that had fought.’

When the battle against the people with the heads of fish had started, Tae Ho couldn't take one step. It wasn't that he was standing on the ship while swinging his sword. He just stood there and watched others fight.

There were Valkyries gathered in front of Tae Ho. They were all fakes and they were equipped with the weapons of the Knights of the Round Table and gear made with the ‘Warrior's Equipment’.

[Valkyrie Captain]

[Fake Heda]

The fake Heda grabbed the sword of Lancelot, Arondight, and expressed etiquette in front of Tae Ho. After her the fake Ingrid, Adenmaha, Reginleif and Rasgrid also did the same with their respective weapons.

Excluding the fake Heda which had an exceptional completion rate, the others were rather lacking, but as the performance of the weapons Tae Ho provided them with were great and their teamwork was immaculate, so they could display quite a notable battle prowess.

If one simply looked at their battle capabilities, then the five fake Valkyries standing in front of Tae Ho would be much stronger than the twenty warriors of Freya's legion gathered together.

Tae Ho expressed etiquette to the fake Heda with a satisfied

expression and then retrieved their equipment and dispelled the 'Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him'. The warriors of Freya's legion cheered once again when they saw the fake Valkyries disappear into light.

'Those eyes are admiring you because they think that you created a saga that makes your army because you were the only one in your legion.'

Tae Ho ignored Cuchulainn's guess of a gaze of one Valkyrie of Freya's legion and then turned around. It was because he was bothered about something while fighting.

"Adenmaha?"

"Hue..?"

Adenmaha let out a strange sound when she got called.

It seemed like she made that sound because she was surprised, but Tae Ho had also gotten surprised as that sound was really unexpected.

"Are you hurt somewhere? Or you have a fever, perhaps?"

"Wh-why? Is my face red?"

Adenmaha grew nervous as she spoke since her face was actually quite red. Tae Ho couldn't help but worry.

"That's something, but you also aren't able to stand properly since the attack. You just keep staring off into a distant place... you're doing it again."

Should he say that she looked uneasy?

She was looking elsewhere instead of looking at Tae Ho while he was talking to her. It seemed like she was evading his eyes.

Adenmaha flinched at Tae Ho's guess and then replied,

"I-I'm not. I'm looking at you properly."

It was a lie. Whoever saw it could notice that she was only

glancing at him. She didn't hurriedly roll her eyes when their eyes met but even turned her head.

Tae Ho frowned even more at the clear symptom. It was because he was seriously worried about Adenmaha's state.

“Are you really not hurt? Like you are seasick or something.”

Tae Ho placed his hand on Adenmaha's forehead. It was slight, but he could feel some heat from it.

On the other hand, Adenmaha let out another vague sound when Tae Ho's hand touched her forehead and said while stuttering and still avoiding his gaze.

“Uh....that's probably the case. Yeah. I'll go rest for a moment.”

Adenmaha let out a long sigh and then turned around to hurry towards the curtain room.

And Tae Ho nodded slowly after looking at her as if he understood it now.

“So that is the case. Sea serpents can also become seasick, it seems.”

Because swimming for yourself and riding on a ship were different things.

Tae Ho got convinced and nodded, and Cuchulainn spoke with a dumbfounded voice as if it was absurd.

‘Hey, did you really learn Scathach's style techniques?’

The essence of that technique was on the insight that let one see through everything. That meant that it was normal for them to be more quick-witted than others.

However, Tae Ho talked back as if he didn't know what he was talking about.

“Why? Is there a problem?”

‘Leave it.’

Perhaps, this was also the effect of having fallen deeply in love.

Tae Ho shared a short conversation with Hildegarde and then sat down and looked out over the water before them.

“It’s really smooth.”

‘Right. You don’t have any notices from Idun?’

Rather than being worried, it seemed like he wanted to hear a notice from her quickly.

Tae Ho shook his head and said,

“Not yet. And thinking about it.....I think that I worried that much for nothing.”

‘What are you talking about?’

“Well, it was two years for me, but it has only been twenty two days for Idun-nim.”

That was right.

Because Tae Ho was the one to enter the Tower of Shadows, not Idun.

It wasn’t that Tae Ho went to meet Idun everyday just because it was him. He did get divine messages from her when he was out on an expedition, but that was also when she had a special business with him.

If matters were urgent, fifteen days was the usual period between their visits. Otherwise, two months and one month were the respective longest period and average.

As that was the cycle that Tae Ho met Idun, twenty two days wasn’t that long of a time.

‘Tch. So he noticed.’

He had hoped for him to feel more haunted thinking that it was two years.

Tae Ho shook his head as Cuchulainn regretted it quite seriously.

“You really are bad as a person. Tch tch tch.”

Of course, the two people were joking. Cuchulainn spoke once again.

‘But still, it’s true that you didn’t greet her before coming out. You should soothe her well later.’

“Yes, I should.”

If it was like Hildegarde had said, even communication magic was difficult to use in the Sea of Ymir.

‘Right, that’s why it should be fine until we get out of Ymir’s sea.’

He had heard that they still had two more days to go until they reached Vanaheim, so he could talk about how to soothe her at a later time.

Tae Ho became determined and looked off into the distance. Later that night, he realized that his thoughts were quite wrong.

—

“My warrior, Tae Ho.”

“The commander of Idun greets the Goddess of Youth.”

Tae Ho expressed etiquette politely while hiding his surprise.

For him to receive a divine message as soon as he relaxed....

‘But still, it doesn’t seem like she’s all that sulky.’

He had thought that she would say something like, ‘So that was the case. You only go with Heda just like a warrior of Heda.’ or ‘Aren’t you Tae Ho, the warrior of Freya?’ as soon as she saw him.

It seemed like there was no need to worry that much as she called him as ‘my warrior’.

Tae Ho grew relieved but was taken aback upon raising his head. It was because he saw the anxiousness written on Idun’s face.

“You are not a warrior of Freya.”

Idun said matter-of-factly. She approached Tae Ho and then said quickly, “You are Idun’s warrior. My warrior, not a warrior of Freya. So don’t say that even as a joke. Understood?”

It seemed like she had seen right through what he was thinking about.

He could know it even without using the insight of Scathach’s style. There was anxiousness and eagerness mixed in Idun’s voice, and Tae Ho could also feel a bit of obsession towards him.

‘It feels vaguely good.’

If Cuchulainn had heard this, he would have said that he was a pervert, but it was still the truth. The truth that none other than Idun was, on some level, obsessed with him and that she treated him specially gave him satisfaction.

“Tae Ho?”

“Of course.”

Tae Ho answered while smiling as if relieving Idun. Idun seemed to have gotten relieved at that smile, and she let out a long sigh.

“Freya-unnie too. How can she entrust with something like this to another commander?”

She could, of course, understand.

It was because it was important enough that Freya, the owner of Valhalla, had the right to give orders to a commander even if they belonged to another legion. A report had also reached Idun, but she ended up contacting Tae Ho.

But still, it was a lie if she said that she wasn’t angry.

Idun pouted and complained a bit more about Freya, and Tae Ho decided to enjoy it leisurely instead of feeling awkward by Idun’s showing of this side of her for the first time.

And a few minutes later—

Idun seemed to have noticed Tae Ho's gaze that she flushed and cleared her throat a few times and then said something else with a calmed expression.

“My warrior, Tae Ho. You should already know this, but you will meet the chief of Vanaheim, Heimstream, if you reach it.”

He had already heard this from Hildegarde.

The chief of the Vanir couldn't be compared to Odin or Freya, but he was still one of the strongest magicians among the Vanir.

Bringing Freya the several magic tools he had stored was the task of Tae Ho.

Idun paused for a moment and then said with a resolved expression.

“It shouldn't be something that Freya planned, but it turned out well anyway. If you meet Heimstream, reveal your identity and say that you have come to claim the legacy of our legion.”

“The legacy.....of our legion?”

“Right, it's the legacy of before the Great War.....of Idun's legion. It is now time to retrieve it.”

Maybe it was his imagination, but Tae Ho could feel a bit of sadness in her voice.

The legion before the Great War.

Tae Ho didn't know much about them. It wasn't because he didn't try to investigate but because there were very few records about them.

Heda would always answer Tae Ho's questions, but she always evaded the question about the legion before the Great War.

But it was now time.

Not only because Idun's legion was rising up again. Perhaps, there was a deeper meaning in it.

But Idun saved her words. She just smiled towards Tae Ho instead of speaking longer.

“I heard from Heda. It must have been really hard being in the Tower of Shadows alone for two years. I am really proud of you.”

It was merely twenty days for Idun, but it was two years for Tae Ho. Tae Ho could feel his heart grow soft.

Tae Ho expressed etiquette once again, and Idun approached Tae Ho a bit more. It was to bless him like she always did.

Tae Ho raised his head and Idun looked at him with a gentle expression. She pondered for a moment, and then gave him the best blessing.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

Idun smiled shyly, and Tae Ho woke from his dream.

—

Time flowed like usual.

Skuld, who had transformed into a swan, flew towards Vanaheim.

Loki, who'd been roaming Midgard, finally stopped.

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, called and gathered the remaining Five Fingers in one spot.

The frost giant king, Harmarti, ordered the giants in the front lines.

Uld and Verdandi looked at the threads of fate.

The King of Gods, Odin, sat before the Lake of Mimir and had a conversation with him. Hugin and Munin told him the news.

Freya looked at Midgard with worried eyes.

And a day after that,

Tae Ho reached Vanaheim.

< Episode 33 – Idun’s sword (3) > End

Episode 34/Chapter 1: Vanaheim (1)

The Gods for the humans of Midgard were the Aesir.

It was because the King of Gods, Odin, alongside Thor, Heimdall, and all the other Gods that had power in Asgard, belonged to the Aesir.

But it wasn't like that from the start.

Long ago, the Aesir didn't only have the giants as their enemies. Another race of Gods that were called the Vanir confronted the Aesir with the right to rule the divine world.

The war between the Aesir and the Vanir didn't come to a conclusion easily. One of the reasons was because they both had the giants as a common enemy, meaning they couldn't unleash all of their strength, but also because the Vanir weren't easy adversaries for the Aesir.

The Gods of the Aesir, including Odin, were all proficient in battle. It wouldn't be excessive to say that the Aesir were a race specialized in battle.

But compared to them, the Vanir weren't proficient in battle. The number of warriors and their skills couldn't be compared to the Aesir.

But the Vanir had the power of strong magic.

If the Aesir were warriors, then the Vanir were magicians. They lacked strong warriors but had strong magicians.

But of course, it wasn't that the Aesir were ignorant on magic as even the King of Gods, Odin, was a strong magician. Especially, his prowess in magic was so outstanding that there were few Gods among the Vanir that had comparable skills to him.

However, the number of Gods that were proficient in magic was different. The Aesir from back then and the current race had many

different points.

The Aesir of that time didn't have strong magical tools like right now. They didn't have Thor, and also didn't have the strongest weapon of Asgard, Mjolnir.

Excluding Odin and a few others, they didn't have resistance towards magic.

The war prolonged.

And at the beginning of the war, the Vanir rather suppressed the Aesir.

But as more time passed, the Aesir grew accustomed to magic. The decisive point was that the Giant of Fire, Loki, who was proficient in magic, became the aide of Odin.

Loki received the good will of Odin even though he was a Giant and became a God of Asgard.

He harassed the Vanir with cowardly and cunning tricks that the simple warriors of the Aesir wouldn't imagine at all.

In addition, the battle prowess of the Aesir increased greatly just by having one more being proficient in magic. The Vanir couldn't overcome the Aesir with their sorcery and magic anymore.

The race of the Aesir had won; however, they couldn't annihilate them or absorb them completely as they still had the common enemy remaining.

Because of that, Odin chose to reconcile with the Vanir and inserted them in Asgard after a long time.

The Vanir that accepted their defeat followed the will of Odin and chose three outstanding Gods among their ranks and sent them to the Aesir as hostages.

And one of them was the Goddess of Magic and Beauty, Freya.

Freya was actually a prisoner of war, but thanks to her outstanding beauty and her character that had a lot of charm, she

received a lot of love from the Gods of the Aesir.

In addition, as she was also a great magician that was comparable to Odin, she could become a magic teacher for the Aesir and transmit them to Asgard.

‘Simply put, she was a war prisoner but was so outstanding that she rose to the highest ranks of Asgard.’

Cuchulainn stated his opinion bluntly after listening to the long explanation of Hildegarde that was full of praise towards Freya.

‘Because Hildegarde is a Valkyrie of Freya.’

Tae Ho just answered inwardly, as Hildegarde was right in front of him.

It was a really obvious thing to say, but the Valkyries showed a really good attitude towards the Gods of their legions.

Ingrid thanked Njord at every meal time, and when Gandur got drunk, she praised Ullr without stop.

‘Now that I see, Heda doesn’t speak about Idun-nim that much.’

He rather felt that Idun spoke about Heda more.

“-is like this. Did you understand?”

Hildegarde put her face closer to Tae Ho and asked, and he nodded reflexively.

‘She said that the current Vanaheim has the role of a magic research center of Asgard.’

Cuchulainn explained quickly as he realized that he hadn’t been able to listen to her because he was thinking about other things. Tae Ho thanked Cuchulainn inwardly and nodded once again.

“So that’s the case.”

“That’s right.”

Hildegarde smiled brightly with a satisfied expression and pointed at the front.

“Welcome to Vanaheim, the mystical land that magic breathes.”

It almost seemed like she had set a timer, for the moment she finished her words, the dense fog cleared up and a big, lush island appeared.

Vanaheim, the land of the Vanir.

‘It makes me think of Ulster.’

Cuchulainn said briefly, and Adenmaha, who was sitting behind Tae Ho, looked at Vanaheim with interested eyes.

—

“I’m the defense commander of the port of Vanaheim, Harod. I welcome you, Commander of Idun.”

There were dozens of lines where one could leave their ship at in the port of Vanaheim.

However, there were only two places that could station a big ship. In the first place, as Vanaheim had no need to go to battle using ships, they had limited the numbers for defense.

Tae Ho thought of the explanation he had heard from Hildegarde before getting off the ship and posing confidently on the dock. He expressed etiquette.

“Idun’s commander greets Harod-nim. Thank you for welcoming us.”

The ones living in Vanaheim were the Gods of Vanir, and if one interprets this in a different way, it meant that Harod was also a God.

Still, on that note, then Adenmaha was also a Goddess as she was a Tuatha De Danann and Gandur, who had nasty alcoholic habits, and Ingrid, a well mannered Valkyrie, were also Gods. But there was the difference in status among Gods.

The defense commander of the port of Vanaheim wasn’t a low rank by any means. If one just thought of the abilities and simply

thought of the role, they could compare him to Heimdall of Asgard, so it was proper to speak politely for Tae Ho.

It seemed like Harod liked Tae Ho's attitude, and he put on a bright smile. That smile suited well with his shining golden armor and white helmet.

‘The affiliation feels clearly different from the Aesir.’

The only Aesir Tae Ho knew was Thor, but whatever the case, compared to the strong and manly Thor, Harod in front of him was tall and had broad shoulders but emanated a more feminine-like aura.

That was only when you compared him with Thor, as it was good to call his strength and manliness as being outside the standards.

When Harod fluttered his violet cape and turned around to take the lead, warriors that were wearing golden armor and had magical spears spread to the sides and lined up as if covering the group.

It was a small, flashy escort squad of sorts.

It seemed like Hildegarde really liked Vanaheim's polite welcome, and she smiled brightly while walking next to Tae Ho to lead the warriors of Freya's legion.

“It would have been good if Merlin was also here.”

Adenmaha, who followed Tae Ho's back, mumbled in a low voice. It was because she could smell the scent of the strong magic covering the entire Vanaheim.

It seemed like there was also magic even in the most insignificant pebbles.

Harod, who'd been taking the lead, stopped and entered a big road. Several big carriages were seen as if they were prepared beforehand. The animals at the reins weren't cats, but just by looking at their shapes, it was quite similar to what they had seen

in the palace of Freya.

The warriors of Valhalla created some distance and then lined up in front of the carriage.

But it was at that moment-

“Oh my.”

Adenmaha let out a small exclamation. Tae Ho turned around and saw a unicorn approaching Adenmaha.

The port of Vanaheim gave a weak artificial feeling compared to the ports of humans cities. It was like it was mixed with nature just like the fairy village they saw in Svartalfheim.

The unicorn that had white fur and had no spots was beautiful to whomever saw it. In addition, it's body was amazingly smooth, and it gave an innocent feeling because of its blue and big eyes.

‘I heard that it was a creature of Olympus. It's also the first time for me seeing one. They are bad creatures that only let pure, beautiful women ride on their backs.’

Tae Ho listened to Cuchulainn's words and nodded. It was because he had heard several things about them but it was the first time seeing one directly.

It seemed like the unicorn really liked Adenmaha that it approached her while lowering its head and acted affectionately.

The female warriors of Freya's legion that were preparing the carriage smiled at that scene.

Harod frowned because of the delay thanks to the unicorn, but he didn't chase it away. He rather looked at Tae Ho's group as if he was making a guess.

On the other hand, the unicorn placed his head on Adenmahas chest and then slightly bit on her clothes and pulled her to its side.

“Huh? You want me to ride on you?”

It seemed like she had guessed right that the unicorn nodded.

Adenmaha pondered for a moment and then glanced at Tae Ho.

“Right, I should ride on something at times as I always carried people.”

But of course, she couldn't become an obstacle to Tae Ho that had to go to Vanaheim with the carriage, so she would only ride on it for a moment or follow the carriage with the unicorn.

Adenmaha hurriedly rose on its back as the unicorn lowered its posture. As she was wearing the clothes of a Valkyrie instead of her usual long skirt, it didn't become an obstacle for her.

But it was at that moment—

As soon as Adenmaha rode on it the eyes of the unicorn changed. Its eyes turned crafty instead of being innocent and then tried to escape somewhere.

The movement of the unicorn was really fast. It was an agility that the warriors of Freya's legion and the warriors of Vanaheim couldn't react to.

But the unicorn which wanted to run suddenly couldn't do so.

It couldn't move after taking two steps as if it had been flash frozen.

Harod opened his eyes sharply and let out a small exclamation. It wasn't magic grabbing it.

The unicorn was standing still and trembling. It couldn't move because of the nasty and overwhelming killing intent currently bombarding it.

“Adenmaha, are you okay?”

Tae Ho approached the blinking Adenmaha that was on top of the unicorn and asked. And only then did she understand what had happened just now.

‘So you did learn properly.’

It was one of the Scathach’s style techniques he learned in the twentieth floor. It was a technique that restrained a low-level adversary by emanating a strong killing intent, but as it was mixed with the technique of Kalsted, that had the blood of a dragon, he had the skills of a kind of dragon peer.

The reason Cuchulainn was satisfied wasn’t only because he had managed to restrain his opponent with killing intent nor because of the completion of the technique.

The only thing Tae Ho’s killing intent was restraining was the unicorn. It wasn’t leaked even by a little towards the others. Thinking about the property of the killing intent that was easy to disperse to the surroundings, it was a really precise control. The reason Harod grew amazed was also because of that.

Adenmaha jumped down from the unicorn while Cuchulainn was feeling proud. She realized the situation as she looked the eyes of the unicorn that had changed completely, but she rather scolded Tae Ho.

“Why are you reacting so sensitively with a prank made by this guy?”

However, her eyes were smiling. No, her entire face was smiling.

‘Her mouth will rip off at this rate.’

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue. On the other hand, Harod, who’d been standing still while the unicorn approached Adenmaha, got closer to Tae Ho and said,

“They are rumored to have bad habits. Forgive me, as it became a test for you. Forgive my rudeness.”

He could have stopped the unicorn before, but he had just left it be. In the end, he had just observed how Tae Ho would react.

“It’s nothing.”

Honestly speaking, it wasn't the he wasn't angry at all, but it wasn't the time to argue about these things. As it were, Adenmaha had acted on her own.

Harod smiled once again at Tae Ho's open-minded reaction.

"I sincerely welcome you to Vanaheim."

—

The carriage still rode and reached the big and white palace while Adenmaha was mumbling because she got hit by Tae Ho. It was said that this place was only opened when guests arrived to Vanaheim.

"Nice to meet you. I'm the chief of the Vanir, Heimstream."

"Idun's commander greets Heimstream-nim."

As soon as they entered the palace, their eyes landed on an old man whose hair and long beard were white standing in the middle of the hall.

The man that was standing below the shining light smiled towards Tae Ho and spoke, and Tae Ho hit his chest and expressed etiquette.

Only Tae Ho was allowed from his group to enter the palace, and because of that, Heimstream told Tae Ho what was going to occur without any secondary greetings.

"I did know that someone special would come, but I didn't think that Freya would send a warrior of Idun's legion instead of someone from her legion."

The slim and tall Heimstream was a man that gave the feeling of being a scholar at first glance. In addition, Tae Ho couldn't feel his strength or divinity even though he was right in front of him unlike Thor or Freya.

However, that wasn't because Heimstream was weak. That rather proved how great of a God he was. There were very few

Gods in Asgard that could completely hide their divinity in front of a commander of Valhalla.

It seemed like it was really unexpected for him that a warrior of Idun was the one to come instead of a warrior of Freya, and he looked at Tae Ho with conspicuous eyes before handing him a chest the size of a person's head that he had prepared beforehand.

“All the things you have to send to Freya are here. The chest is protected by a strong magic, but I still hope you can be careful.”

“I will take it into account.”

Tae Ho stored the chest inside of Unnir. Actually, putting it inside of his inventory was more secure, but he could just do it outside. There was no need to activate his saga in front of a chief of the Vanir.

It was a trip that had taken a few days, but it wasn't excessive to say that the matter ended here.

But Tae Ho didn't stand up immediately, and Heimstream put on a smile.

“It seems like you have something to tell me.”

It seemed like he already knew what he was going to say and because of that Tae Ho said directly.

“Idun-nim said that I should bring back the legacy of the legion.”

“Right. I think that, after looking at you, it is finally time.”

He put on a soft smile once again and then rolled his finger in the air. On cue, violet space door materialized beside him.

“This is the passageway leading to the place which contains the legacy of Idun's legion.”

Heimstream said as much and then gestured lightly towards the space door. It seemed like he was telling him to go and bring it as there was nothing more to talk about.

It didn't seem like he was testing Tae Ho at this point. Realizing this, Tae Ho stood up and promptly strode into the space door Heimstream had made.

< Episode 34 – Vanaheim (1) > End

Episode 34/Chapter 2: Vanaheim (2)

The place that appeared beyond the space door was a vast, devastated landscape.

Tae Ho instantly knew.

He was gazing upon a remnant of the Great War.

It was the same scene that he had seen in Svartalfheim, and Tae Ho remembered the trace of the Great War that was hidden in a crack of the world.

He had also heard that there were some traces of the Great War in Vanaheim.

Tae Ho looked a bit further. There was a sky, but it was dark. The chaotic flow of magic had formed an invisible whirlpool, and the land had an ash gray color just like the destroyed remains of Erin.

The devastated land had a unique shape. It felt like there was a wall or some other obstacle blocking the space beyond the part that waved like heat.

It felt like they had torn off the trace of the Great War located in the crack of the world or ripped off a part of it and placed it in a magical space.

Tae Ho let out a long sigh and looked at his surroundings. In his vision, many icons were revealed upon his activation of 'Eyes of the Dragon'.

[Sword of Idun's warrior, Karen]

[Sword of Idun's warrior, Lugh]

[Spear of Idun's Valkyrie, Asir]

There were weapons lying about everywhere. There weren't only the weapons that were used by the lowest-ranked warriors but also the weapons used by the intermediate and superior-ranked warriors.

Tae Ho could sense the foreboding atmosphere. This was undoubtedly the place where Idun's legion had faced its annihilation.

Idun and Heda didn't tell him what had happened to Idun's legion in the Great War in detail, and Tae Ho didn't ask further as it seemed like it was painful for them to even remember it.

In the first place, the fact that there was only one Valkyrie remaining was already evidence of several things.

Idun's legion had been utterly obliterated. That, or only an exceptionally small minority had survived to the point that everyone excluding Heda had disappeared over the past hundred years.

Tae Ho walked by, following the weapons that were lined up in the ground, and then stopped in his tracks. It was because he saw white gold letters in a not distant place.

[Magical sword of Idun's commander, Sigmund, Argentra]

The black and massive magic sword emanated a faint green light and was stuck like a tombstone.

As he had heard that there hasn't been any commanders in Idun legion, Tae Ho could be certain that he was the second generation commander.

The weapons the warriors of Idun had left behind. Could these be the things Idun had spoken about?

It did make sense. By this point in time, new warriors had entered Idun's legion. Retrieving the weapons of the warriors of the previous generation, those which now functioned as tombstones, would be more efficiently used in arming the current one.

But he thought that it wasn't the case.

Tae Ho touched the hilt of Argentra for a moment and then

continued walking.

He started to see other things. It was the giants and the fragments of their weapons. They were emanating a strong aura even though a hundred years had passed.

Idun's legion had been ravaged during the fighting against them.

What happened at their last moment? Was it a situation where they couldn't even retreat?

He walked a bit further up and Tae Ho stopped walking unconsciously.

There was a trace of divine power left in the ground, and Tae Ho's 'Eyes of the Dragon', which had grown exponentially more powerful as he did, told him to whom it belonged. No, he could feel it just by facing it.

[Goddess of Youth and Life]

[Idun's divine power]

It was scattered everywhere. Tae Ho felt that it was a bit different to what Idun usually emitted, but he could feel that it was similar in its overall appearance.

The scattered divine power didn't only belong to Idun. There was another divine power felt right next to it.

[God of Music and Poetry]

[Bragi's divine power]

It was the name of a God he'd heard for the first time. Tae Ho had already memorized the Gods of Asgard that had legions and their commanders and also their representative Valkyries.

He must have been a God that has lost his life in the Great War, just like Freya's brother, Freyr.

Just why was his divine power felt in the place Idun's legion got annihilated?

Did Idun face a big injury in this battle?

‘The warriors of Idun fought desperately to protect Idun and Bragi, and their efforts resulted in Idun barely managing to survive.....it seems like it’s that kind of story, anyway.’

Cuchulainn said in a low voice. It was his guess that the warriors of Idun’s legion had chosen to face an honorable death to protect their Goddess.

It was quite a convincing story. He automatically thought that Heda was an apprentice Valkyrie or had stayed behind in another place, so she had barely managed to survive.

But it was when Tae Ho took a few more steps following the trace of the divine power.

“Huh?”

‘What? Do you see something?’

[Idun’s husband, Bragi]

[Bragi’s wife, Idun]

[He rests in this place]

There was no need to see it with the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’. Those were letters that were engraved on the elaborate yet decayed tombstone.

‘So Idun was a widow. Hoh, it makes her feel more mature.’

Cuchulainn made a joke to try to lift up the mood, but his efforts were entirely in vain.

Idun’s husband, Bragi.

It made sense now why his divine power remained in the place where Idun’s legion had met its demise and that Idun’s legion had put their lives to protect him.

However, Tae Ho didn’t accept Cuchulainn’s joke nor did he even acknowledge it. It wasn’t because he couldn’t imagine the gentle

and bright Goddess having a husband.

This tombstone wasn't only for Bragi. The name of Idun was also engraved in it.

Cuchulainn misunderstood for a moment because Idun was currently alive, but he soon realized that something was wrong.

‘Uh, what happened?’

If this was the tombstone of Idun and Bragi, then just who was the Idun they'd been associating with until now?

She wasn't a fake. Because if she was one, all the things that happened until now wouldn't make sense.

‘Did she inherit the name of Idun or something?’

Cuchulainn stated his guess. Cases that you received a name of a family was quite common. The administrator of the golden apple tree was called Idun, and if one thought that it was the name all of the administrators received, then it made sense.

The place the previous Idun and her husband, Bragi, had died at. Idun's legion had died alongside them.

Then, just what was the legacy that was in this place?

Tae Ho lowered his posture in front of the tombstone. He slowly placed his hand on the tombstone and activated the power of Idun.

The faint golden light started to transmit from Tae Ho's palm to the tombstone and then a reaction occurred in the tombstone. The scattered divine power of Idun and Bragi started to gather on it.

The light grew stronger. The divine power of the previous Idun was golden, and Bragi's divine power was silver. It was so bright that Tae Ho felt like he would be blinded.

Cuchulainn called Tae Ho's name, but the latter couldn't hear him. He couldn't even realize that the divine power of Idun was being fired from the weapons of the warriors of Idun's legion that

were scattered everywhere.

It was because he heard a voice.

The voices of the previous Idun and Bragi.

Their call.

Tae Ho opened his eyes. He wasn't at the wasted remnant of the Great War anymore. The entire world was black, and there were two people standing before him whom he'd never before met.

The woman was young and beautiful. She had long, golden hair with a mild smile. She was a beauty that wouldn't fall short to Freya, and her gentle atmosphere was similar to Idun.

There was also a middle-aged man that had an exceptionally long beard standing next to her. He was tall and had a good body, but he didn't give the feeling that he was a warrior even by a little bit. His really big and clear golden eyes were memorable.

They were certainly the previous Idun and her husband, Bragi.

The two Gods looked at Tae Ho, but he realized that they weren't souls that stayed behind like Cuchulainn or the Knights of the Round Table.

They were really remains. You could say that the two were echoes of their divine power.

Idun extended her hand towards Tae Ho. Tae Ho hesitated a bit at her gesture that told him to get closer but chose to walk towards her anyway. The divine powers of the two Gods that were before him felt like living fire. It was burning right now, but one couldn't know when it would extinguish.

The previous Idun was a bit shorter than the current one, and because of that, she looked up at Tae Ho with her big, shiny eyes. It seemed like she would ask a question at any time, as her eyes shone with curiousness.

But the previous Idun then blocked her mouth with her two

hands as if it wasn't the time to speak....or that there was no time to begin with.

Tae Ho grew a bit taken aback at that cute action, and Bragi laughed. He, who was taller than Tae Ho, placed his big hand on top of Tae Ho's shoulder and then clenched it.

It was a really strong grip. Tae Ho frowned unconsciously, but it seemed like Bragi wasn't planning on letting go. The symbols of Bragi and the previous Idun were engraved in Tae Ho's shoulder and wrist.

“May our blessing accompany you.”

The previous Idun then spoke. Bragi looked at Tae Ho with complicated eyes mixed with resentment, rage, expectation, and resignation and made a request.

“I'm leaving our daughter to you.”

The current Idun.

The woman which two Gods and an entire legion had died protecting.

“You must never make her cry. Understand?”

The previous Idun said playfully, and that was the end. The divine power of the two people started to disappear. It started to dim little by little, and then it disappeared completely.

Tae Ho opened his eyes again. He was in front of the tombstone and he could feel that his shoulder and wrists were burning. But those weren't the only places. Tae Ho screamed and opened his mouth. It was because his tongue was so hot it felt like it was burning.

“Hey, are you okay? Hey!”

Cuchulainn called out to Tae Ho several times, but Tae Ho just stuck out his tongue without answering and looked down. He couldn't see his tongue properly, but he could read the words

through the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’.

[Bragi’s rune]

[A rune engraved by the God of Music and Poetry, Bragi. His speech has a magical power within it]

Tae Ho said random words. His voice wasn’t different from before, but he could feel a definite change.

He hadn’t tested it yet, but his ability to sing would probably have increased greatly.

‘Wait. Your words give great trust, people fall for your words more easily, you are able to control the sweet feeling more easily and you can even sing well? This is the most suitable ability to pick up girls?!’

Tae Ho was at a loss for words for a moment.

He was still someone that was called the Prince of Light, so how did all his thoughts flow that way?

‘Why? What else is more important for a man?’

Tae Ho just looked at his shoulder and wrist instead of talking back to him. It was hidden by his clothes, but the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’ didn’t miss the two runes of the Gods that were shining with distinctive gold and silver lights.

The power behind those two runes.

The real legacy Idun had told him to retrieve.

The rune of the previous Idun wasn’t that different from the blessing of the current Idun. Actually, you could say that they were the same.

But the rune of Bragi was different.

The several effects Bragi’s rune gave were only supportive ones. But the reason it was engraved on Tae Ho’s tongue was to unleash the real power his rune possessed.

The God of Music and Poetry, Bragi.

The God who sang legends to life.

Tae Ho activated a saga reflexively. He then added the power of Idun and Bragi onto it.

[Strengthened Saga]

[The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

“Ma....master?!”

Adenmaha appeared in front of Tae Ho. It wasn't the doppelganger but the real one.

She was shocked from having been suddenly transported from the entrance to the white palace, and she looked at her surroundings in amazement.

Meanwhile, Tae Ho hurriedly looked away and ignored Adenmaha.

The reason was simple. It was because Bragi's rune hadn't only strengthened one saga.

[Strengthened Saga]

[The Eyes of the Dragon See Through All Things]

‘Hey! What can you see?! Huh?! What did you see?!’

Cuchulainn asked hurriedly, but Tae Ho didn't answer him.

< Episode 34 – Vanaheim (2) > End

Episode 34/Chapter 3: Vanaheim (3)

“What happened? Where are we?”

Adenmaha checked her surroundings and then spoke with a slightly frightened voice. It was because she'd been called suddenly but also because she felt that the isolated space itself was twisted.

“Master?”

Adenmaha approached Tae Ho and raised her head to meet his gaze. Tae Ho looked down at Adenmaha, but it was only for a moment. He then turned his head sharply.

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue at that and said,

‘Hey, she is asking you. You should answer her and slowly check on her from head to heel. If you can share what you see, it's all the better.’

Those were advices that weren't worthy to be heard; however there was someone that moved regardless of Cuchulainn's advice. It was Adenmaha.

“Master? Why do you keep avoiding my eyes?”

Adenmaha blinked her eyes and tilted her head before moving again. This time she moved sideways to put herself in Tae Ho's range of view instead of approaching him.

“Adenmaha, wait. Wait.”

Tae Ho looked at the other side once again and then Adenmaha frowned and even opened her eyes suspiciously.

“How suspicious.”

There was a bit of playfulness in her voice. It was because Tae Ho acting this way was quite new and funny.

“Why aren't you able to see me properly? And why are your eyes shining?”

Adenmaha moved her body to try to match Tae Ho's eyes, but Tae Ho turned his head desperately and said quickly,

"No, well-"

"So?"

Tae Ho couldn't speak anymore. It was because Adenmaha extended her two hands and grabbed him.

Of course, Adenmaha couldn't be compared to Tae Ho in strength, but the current Tae Ho was in a really panicked state. He couldn't push away Adenmaha, let alone move himself.

"Why do you keep dodging me, I wonder."

Adenmaha suppressed Tae Ho like a snake that had prey before it. She didn't know the reason, but now that it turned out like this, she decided to release all the hard feelings she had accumulated up to this point.

Tae Ho stepped back and then fell on the ground with Adenmaha on top of him.

'You can just close your eyes, but you don't.'

While Cuchulainn was clicking his tongue and criticizing him, Adenmaha grabbed Tae Ho's head in an almost perfect mount position and didn't let Tae Ho turn away.

"Yes? Master?"

Tae Ho thought of closing his eyes, but he discovered himself opening them just slightly.

In the end, Tae Ho wanted to curse at himself and release the saga, but that wasn't easy either. It couldn't be controlled properly, perhaps because the saga had been strengthened suddenly.

"Master?"

Adenmaha put her face closer to Tae Ho's and he realized that

there were no other options. He looked at Adenmaha fixedly and yelled,

“I can see it!”

“What?”

Adenmaha tilted her head and asked provokingly, but Tae Ho couldn't say the words. Because of that, he grabbed Adenmaha's wrist and activated another saga.

[Strengthened Saga]

[The One that Controls Dragons]

Tae Ho synchronized his senses with Adenmaha, and he showed all the things he had seen to her.

And about 1 or 2 seconds later-

“Hwik?!”

Adenmaha let out a mortified scream and hurriedly stood from her position.

—

“Shameless! Pervert! Enemy of humankind!”

‘I have certainly said that I wouldn't watch. You were the one that forced me.’

Tae Ho rebuked inwardly. It was because he would only provoke her even more if he said it out loud.

“Ah, anyways! This is a trace of the Great War, and your saga has been strengthened, right?”

Adenmaha changed the subject first, and Tae Ho didn't miss the opportunity and followed her up.

“Right. This is a trace of the Great War. It doesn't seem like it's hidden in a crack of the world, but it was forcefully separated with magic. The reason my saga was strengthened is because of the blessing of the God of Music and Poetry, Bragi.”

He said all of those things quickly without breathing out once. Adenmaha, who barely managed to understand all of that, tilted her head at the name she'd heard for the first time.

“Bragi-nim?”

“Idun-nim's husband.”

“Ah, Idun-nim's hus.....Idun-nim is a widow?!”

Adenmaha let out a shocked voice. It seemed like she had met her once opposed to what Tae Ho had thought.

‘Well, she must have met her once to become a Valkyrie.’

Tae Ho, who became convinced by that idea alone, picked the most important point and continued.

“No, the previous Idun-nim.”

But it seemed like that was too summed up. Adenmaha blinked with a face that mirrored her confusion and then asked for an explanation with a slow voice.

“Explain it in a bit more detail.”

“Right. That would be good.”

Tae Ho nodded and took out Gae Bolg to provide an easier explanation. He made Adenmaha grab a part of it and started his explanation.

“Uh, so summarizing it up, Idun's legion was annihilated in this place, right? Annihilated to the point where the previous Idun-nim and her husband Bragi-nim also died.”

Adenmaha picked the most important points after listening to all of Tae Ho's story. Tae Ho nodded once again.

“Right, and..... I don't know exactly, but it seems like the current Idun-nim is the daughter of the previous Idun and Bragi and inherited the position of administrator to the golden apple tree and seat of the Goddess of Life and Youth.”

The previous Idun and Bragi had said that they would entrust their daughter to him.

So based on the situation, the daughter they were talking about should be the Idun Tae Ho knew.

“Hmm. It’s a bit unexpected, but it’s not that there were no precedents of this. There were also some Gods among the Tuatha De Danann that took over the ranks and names of others.”

Adenmaha nodded while having her arms crossed and then looked at Tae Ho’s right shoulder and left wrist before continuing.

“Anyways, Idun-nim has told you to retrieve the legacy of the legion, and the legacy you received were the runes of the previous Idun-nim and Bragi-nim?”

“Right. The rune of Bragi-nim...I think that my saga became strengthened thanks to his blessing.”

“You said that he was the God of Music and Poetry, so it does make sense. So that means that he was the God of bards and troubadours, right?”

Because spreading tales and stories was their job.

The one that sings legends.

The one that spreads the story of a warrior.

It was obvious for Bragi to have the power to strengthen a saga.

‘Now that I see, didn’t all the sagas get strengthened in a lump? Or they get strengthened by time?’

Cuchulainn worded his first normal question in a long while, and because of that, Tae Ho answered almost immediately unlike before.

“I think that it’s closer to the latter. I will have to investigate a bit more.....but I feel like I’m not able to use it perfectly because my capability in it is lacking?”

“Um, shouldn’t the divine power of Bragi-nim still be unfamiliar for you, Master?”

He did feel a bit unfamiliar with the divine power of the previous Idun, but it was still familiar overall.

However, Bragi’s divine power was completely unfamiliar to Tae Ho, so he could only be clumsy in using it.

‘The God of Music and Poetry....how unfortunate. If someone had taken over his rank like the current Idun, it would be helpful in several ways.’

Tae Ho thought of the same thing. For the current Idun to have taken over the name, divine power, and rank of the previous Idun meant that she had inherited a divine mandate. It was possible to succeed a rank or or authority on such a level.

But it was meaningless to worry about such a thing right now.

Because of that, Adenmaha said something else.

“Anyways.....how did the sagas that got strengthened change? Like the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’ and..... ‘The Eyes of the Dragon see Through all Things’.”

Adenmaha’s face flushed completely upon recalling what had happened a few minutes ago. Tae Ho ignored her face and said,

“Firstly, the limit of the number of Valkyries increased for the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’. It was nine before, but I can now register eighteen.”

‘The number nine is treated as a holy number in Asgard, but it doubled in an instant. Now you won’t need to worry about who to put in the list.’

“For now.”

“For now, he says. Just how many more Valkyries do you want to obtain?”

The last one was Adenmaha. She looked at Tae Ho and mumbled,

and Tae Ho spread his chest shamelessly and said,

“Won’t it be better to strengthen my saga even more and create an army of Valkyries? If I penetrate through the enemy ranks alone and then summon a lot of Valkyries....it’s really a one man army, right?”

‘So you want to roll on a field of flowers. There were also male Valkyries, so how about putting them in your army?’

Cuchulainn’s unproductive opinion passed through one of Tae Ho’s ears and flowed out the other. Adenmaha shook her head as if it was absurd and said,

“That, and a summoning function was added?”

“Yes. I think that I’m able to summon the real deal, but I feel like there’s a distance limit.”

The reason Adenmaha had been summoned was because she was the closest to him among the Valkyries that were registered on his list.

Heda and Ingrid were in Valhalla, and Gandur, Reginleif, Rasgrid, and the rest were in the much further away realm of Midgard.

“Hm. So if we organize it, the number of members increased and a function to call the real one got added, right?”

“Right, and for the eyes of the dragon.....”

Tae Ho paused and then turned his eyes away. Adenmaha blushed and also turned her eyes away so they didn’t exchange glances.

“The effect range widened, and the ability to grasp a weak point was also strengthened. The vision.....also got strengthened.”

“R-right. What about Bragi’s rune? You said that it also had a function.”

‘That’s right. That’s also important. Now that it came out, let’s

test a few things.’

Cuchulainn received Adenmaha’s words. Tae Ho started to explain as he also agreed to it.

“Firstly, the functions I saw with the eyes of the dragon are as follows.”

His words became more trustable. Even if he said the same things, the positive reception to his words from others was increased.

Secondly, his words had become more convincing.

Thirdly, he could influence the mood of the adversary through his words.

Fourthly, Tae Ho was able to sing really well.

And lastly, the functions of the tongue, such as his sense of taste, had grown more intense and precise.

Actually, it wasn’t that he could see the explanations in that much detail with the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’. It was because the explanation that came with Bragi’s rune also came with a lot of metaphoric explanations.

The five functions that were lined up were the explanations Tae Ho came up with after analyzing and guessing it.

But it wasn’t impossible to guess what the overall ability was. Adenmaha put on a thoughtful face and then smiled brightly.

“This will be really useful. You are saying that your speech will strengthen, right?”

‘That’s right. You were already a swindler, but you now hold the aptitude of a swindler king.’

Cuchulainn thought of the warriors that were smiling brightly in Idun’s residence and then had a silent time of meditation.

But Tae Ho shook his head.

“Cuchulainn, I have never lied. I just exaggerated it a bit. Isn’t that right, Adenmaha?”

“I will just say that’s the case.”

Adenmaha evaded Tae Ho’s eyes as if she couldn’t agree to his words.

‘Fine. Whatever the case, it will be effective in gathering more warriors to Idun’s legion. Now, sing.’

“He-here? Without any chorus?”

‘Now you are acting like a pro. Just sing.’

“Dugun dugun.”

The last one that put the effect was Adenmaha. It seemed like she was really looking forward to it, for her eyes were shining.

“Le-let’s pass this one for now. Let’s investigate the other things. Um, like the one that gives more trust to the adversary and makes them feel better?”

Cuchulainn continued speaking as if he didn’t really want to hear Tae Ho singing that much.

‘Precisely speaking, it’s more like controlling. Should I call it as oratorical talent? Let’s test it on Adenmaha.’

“Me?”

‘Right, you. Say something to her. Let’s see how she reacts.’

Tae Ho looked at Adenmaha at Cuchulainn’s urge and her eyes were shining expectantly.

What should he say?

Tae Ho thought for a moment but decided to say anything. In the first place, they were testing the effects of the rune, so there was no need to say anything cool.

“Hm hm. Adenmaha.”

“Yes.”

Adenmaha answered gently and looked at Tae Ho. Tae Ho felt the pressure and opened his mouth.

“Yo! You are really beautiful! You are just like a flower!”

His voice was split because of the nervousness, and the words he chose were also cheesy. Surely enough, Cuchulainn started to scream.

‘Kuaaaaaaaaaaagh! Painful. Too painful! Hey, how can you say something like that among all the things you could have said?!’

Cuchulainn kept criticizing him but suddenly shut his mouth unconsciously. It was because the reaction of Adenmaha wasn’t normal.

“Re-really? Ehehe.”

Adenmaha, who’d became red like a tomato, looked down as if she was embarrassed and kept laughing sillily. It seemed like she was trying not to laugh too much like a fool, but thanks to that, one could see that she was dying of happiness.

“It....does have an effect.”

Tae Ho spoke in a bewildered state. It was because he also thought that his words were a mess. For the effects to be this good....

‘No, she doesn’t count. It’s null. Think about it. There’s no way she can be used as a test.’

Because she was really blinded by affection.

Cuchulainn felt stuffed alone and then held back Tae Ho that wanted to say a few more words.

‘Hey, let’s go out. You can finish the test later. Was he called Heimstream? The chief of the Vanir should be waiting for you’

It was a reasonable thing. It wasn’t easy to imagine Heimstream

waiting until Tae Ho got out, but whatever the case, Tae Ho had to go out for their meeting to come to an end.

If one also thought about Hildegarde and her group waiting outside, they had to hurry.

‘Perhaps, there’s a commotion because of Adenmaha.’

She had, after all, disappeared without warning.

It wasn’t the time to be testing things just like Cuchulainn had said. Because of that, Tae Ho nodded and stood up.

“Tch.”

Adenmaha pouted as if it was regretful, but there wasn’t anything that could be done.

Cuchulainn laughed.

‘You can test it as much as you want in the residence so don’t feel regretful. Let’s hurry, anyways.’

“Wait a moment. We should take all the things we have to.”

Tae Ho interrupted Cuchulainn this time. Cuchulainn and Adenmaha asked at the same time.

‘What?’

“What?”

Things they should take. Wasn’t this the end as they had received Idun’s and Bragi’s rune?

Tae Ho clicked his tongue and opened his arms widely. He pointed at the white gold colored weapons that were close to him and said.

“The legacy of the legion.”

The weapons his seniors had left. They would be given to his juniors.

Tae Ho activated the “Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’

and mobilized all the Valkyries, excluding Freya, to retrieve the scattered weapons.

—

“It took longer than I expected.”

< Episode 34 – Vanaheim (3) > End

Episode 34/Chapter 4: Vanaheim (4)

“It took longer than I thought.”

Tae Ho flinched at the voice that he heard when he got out of the space door.

Fortunately enough, Heimstream wasn't just dumbfoundedly looking at the space door.

He was inspecting some books and documents while sitting in a big table next to it. If one just looked at him, it looked like he was investigating something.

“I'm sorry. Displaying etiquette towards my seniors took longer than I expected.”

Tae Ho hurriedly apologized. Those were common words, but the only thing in common was the contents. Heimstream placed his eyes off the documents the moment he heard Tae Ho's words and then looked at him. His face then drew a smile.

“It seems like you put your hands on Bragi's rune.”

Because the strength behind his words were different. Tae Ho's words now had the power to move a person's heart.

“It's a rune that will bring danger if held by a weak person. The power of words is that strong.”

‘In that case, it seems like disaster will soon befall the Nine Realms.’

It was when Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and criticized that Adenmaha, who'd left the space door a bit later than Tae Ho, glanced at Tae Ho and Heimstream and then hit her chest twice.

“Idun's Valkyrie, Adenmaha, greets the chief of the Vanir.”

The movements of Adenmaha and eyes were graceful and beautiful; however, Heimstream didn't look interested in the external appearances, but in another thing.

“For a Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann to have become a Valkyrie of Asgard. How marvelous.”

It seemed like his words were close to mumbling to himself, so Adenmaha pretended not to have heard it.

It seemed like Heimstream also liked that, and he laughed in a low tone. He then sat in his chair and said, “The space door shook for a moment, but it seems like you called your Valkyrie. Hm. What an interesting saga.”

Heimstream was looking at the air and not at Tae Ho. The place Tae Ho had been in was a place that was being maintained by Heimstream’s magic. Because of that, Heimstream could know what had happened in the trace of the Great War.

“Is it a saga that recreates fake Valkyries that have a deep connection with you and can call for a real one when they are close? Although it will only work when you register them, it seems like it will be quite useful. On top of that, it’s a saga that can be greatly abused like Bragi’s rune, so it’s a saga that not just anyone should learn.”

‘Ahh, I understand. So you are the disaster of the Valkyries.’

Cuchulainn received Heimstream’s words. Meanwhile, Heimstream used some magic while waving his hand a few times and then frowned.

“The name of the saga...’The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him?’”

It was a voice layered with astonishment. Tae Ho flinched once again and Adenmaha did the same.

“Just what do you have to do for a saga like this to get created?”

He didn’t speak alone this time. Heimstream was looking at Tae Ho right now.

‘Yeah. It is marvelous indeed.’

A saga wasn't made out of nothing. There had to be an origin and a transmission for a saga to be created.

So that meant that for the saga 'The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him' to be made, a similar story had to have happened.

Tae Ho received Heimstream's curious and perplexed eyes and replied calmly, "It's thanks to the representative Valkyrie of my legion. She took care of me a lot after I first entered Valhalla."

Whatever Tae Ho was feeling right now, his words that came out through his tongue that had Bragi's rune engraved were good to hear and trustworthy.

But his adversary was the chief of the Vanir. Heimstream smacked his lips a few times as if reviewing what Tae Ho had just said and then nodded.

"If it's Idun's representative Valkyrie, it should be Heda."

"Do you know her?"

Tae Ho was the one to get surprised this time. Heimstream didn't miss the joy in Tae Ho's voice and smiled.

"A bit. There are merely ten representative Valkyries in Valhalla, and in addition, she's the youngest representative Valkyrie. There are a lot of reasons to remember her."

The Valkyrie that had protected Idun's legion alone for a long time.

The last survivor of Idun's legion.

Heimstream remembered the day Idun's legion suffered devastating losses.

He couldn't forget Heda who had faced the gruesome, devastated lands alone.

Originally, Idun's legion was a legion that shouldn't have existed. It was because Odin had decided to disband Idun's legion, as it wasn't able to work as a legion anymore.

But Idun's legion wasn't disbanded. That was the result of Heda supplicating Odin, believing she would protect it.

‘And in the end, it resurrected.’

For the day that the commander of Idun's legion came to this place to retrieve Idun's and Bragi's legacy had actually come true.

Heda, who'd been but a small girl, would have matured as a beautiful woman. Heimstream imagined that for a moment and looked at Tae Ho once again. He said what he just remembered.

“Idun's commander. What do you think a saga is?”

“It's a magic of Asgard that recreates the story of a warrior and the several thoughts, beliefs, and strength other people have in it.”

Tae Ho answered reflexively. It was because he had heard that several times from Heda and Ragnar. However, Heimstream put on a vague smile instead of saying that he was right.

“Right. It is normally told like that. If you ask the warriors of Valhalla, two or three will answer like that. And the remaining seven or eight would say that they didn't know.”

Tae Ho nodded unconsciously, and it was the same for Adenmaha.

Because those were the warriors of Valhalla.

Heimstream spoke with a light joke and continued by saying,

“The power of magic...it's both wrong and right. The magic Asgard currently uses, and the magic our race has developed, both have a long history behind them. The order and system are also clear, and the theory is also right. But it's a bit different for the saga.”

The magic of the Vanir was certainly mystical, but it had a clear theory behind it. It was an exact science like math where adding one plus one would give someone a two.

“The one that made the sagas isn't Odin nor Freya nor even me.

The sagas weren't made by the Gods of Asgard.....it's a shared strength that the entire Asgard possesses."

It was different to magic. In the first place, the origin of it was a different strength.

"Idun's commander, why do you think the warriors of Asgard and the Nine Realms all use a different strength? Is it to have a peculiarity of themselves?"

Asgard had the sagas, and there was the geass and the sentence of the Milesians in Erin.

"Just like you said.....It's because of the shared strength each world has."

"That's right. Because of that, it's impossible to use the power of another world in general. Why can't the warriors of Valhalla use the sentence of the Milesians or the geass? They would be able to grow much stronger if they did. And it's the same for the 'task' of Olympus and the 'energy' in the Temple."

There was no warrior of Valhalla that used the 'task' that was the power of Olympus.

And martial arts that utilized 'energy' also didn't exist.

"The reason is simple. It's not that they don't use it willingly but because they physically can't. Right, Cuchulainn?"

As soon as Heimstream finished speaking, Cuchulainn materialized next to Tae Ho. Just like the cave of Scathach was her magical territory, this place was Heimstream's magical region.

"It's been a while."

"It has, Prince of Light. I'm a bit disappointed, as you didn't greet me since the beginning."

"I am doing it now."

Cuchulainn smiled bitterly and expressed etiquette. Heimstream nodded and then kept talking to Tae Ho.

“A warrior being able to use the power of another world is a really special one. It’s not that it’s completely unheard of, but it also doesn’t happen frequently. But you are really special even among them, as you are using the power of Asgard and Erin at the same time.”

Cuchulainn had fought with the warriors of Asgard in the Great War, but he couldn’t use the sagas.

It was the same for Ragnar. He was bright on the power of Erin to the point he had warned Tae Ho about the danger of the geass, but in the end, he couldn’t use the sentence of the Milesians or the power of Erin.

But of course, it wasn’t that it was completely impossible. Not being able to use it in general meant that there were special exceptions. Even with the geass, one needed to pay a great price for it, as its magical property was really strong, but it was possible to use it.

And there were more special cases that could use the power of a foreign world even without paying that price.

“I don’t know if you have already heard this from Heda, but there are warriors that came to Valhalla from another world. They were all able to use the sagas, and that is because the world allowed them to do so.”

The saga was an innate strength the world had. It was a power that was granted only to the ones that lived in that world. Because of that, the world was able to allow the usage of that strength.

“Cuchulainn, why did you choose the commander of Idun as the successor of Erin?”

“Because he is indeed the successor of Erin.”

“Is it not because only Tae Ho could become the successor among the warriors of Valhalla?”

“Is it that different?”

“What a warrior-like reply.”

Heimstream laughed like a magician.

“Idun’s commander. You are special. Even if we bring warriors of another world forcefully, they won’t be able to become like you. There’s a high probability they won’t merely be able to use the power of different worlds at the same time but also won’t even be able to use the sagas. That’s because they haven’t been chosen by the world, since we’d have brought them forcefully.”

Tae Ho remembered what he and Hildegarde had talked about when he met her again in the night banquet.

Odin and Freya weren’t the ones that chose who they brought from the mortal world. Perhaps, the will of the world may have really chosen Tae Ho just like Heimstream had said.

“What I’m trying to say is that you are special. You are someone that has been chosen by the world.”

“Is that not the result of nonsense and gibberish?”

As Cuchulainn butted in, Heimstream laughed once again.

“I got busted. Right, if we return to the beginning of the story....the sagas are a shared power of the world. That’s why they don’t have a fixed rule as the Gods or humans think. Only a similar rule exists.”

The reason Heimstream had stated this wasn’t to say that Tae Ho was special.

“You may have already heard this from your teacher, Ragnar, but there’s no need to limit your sagas yourself. The power of your sagas, your story, will always be able to reach further.”

What would happen if you tried to recreate the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’ with magic? You would need a really, really huge-scaled magic for it.

But it wasn’t like that for the saga. Perhaps, it may be able to

develop even more.

“This is all I wanted to say including the gibberish nonsense. But Idun’s commander. Don’t you need more pockets? There would have been so many weapons to put it all inside of Unnir.”

“I’m fine. I retrieved all of them.”

Heimstream blinked as Tae Ho smiled and answered him and then he understood his words.

“The power of a saga is really incredible.”

He laughed pleasingly and stood up.

“Send my greetings to Freya and the current Idun.”

“I will.”

Tae Ho fixed his posture. It seemed like Heimstream had grown to like Tae Ho, and he hit his chest twice with a good mood.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Tae Ho left Heimstream’s room after he finished greeting him.

—

“Hua. I thought like I would die out of breath.”

As soon as the big door, which resembled a gate, slammed shut, Adenmaha let out a sigh of relief. She didn’t end there and then slightly pulled on Tae Ho’s arm.

“It seems like all the great magicians are weird and cranky.”

‘Hey. Are you talking about Master right now?’

Cuchulainn spoke with sharp eyes, but unfortunately, Adenmaha wasn’t grabbing Gae Bolg right now.

Because of that, she hummed a bit more and talked ill about Scathach a bit more. It was because one could even curse the king when he wasn’t present.

“Uh.....Master?”

“Ah, sorry. I had something to think about.”

Adenmaha let out a sigh of relief because she had thought that it bothered Tae Ho that she had spoken ill about Scathach. On the other hand, Tae Ho fell into his thoughts once again.

It was because a worry he had from a long time had surged up, although he didn't say it out loud.

Tae Ho's comrades.

More specifically, the professional gamers that he played Dark Age with instead of the warriors of Valhalla.

They hadn't said that it was a shared power of the world like Heimstream, but he had already heard from Heda and Ragnar that they probably won't be able to use the sagas even if they brought people from another world.

But he still couldn't erase his uneasiness.

Because Heda's and Ragnar's words were merely a guess.

What Tae Ho was worried about wasn't that another pro-gamer would appear in Valhalla to take away his specialness. What Tae Ho worried about was rather the pro-gamers themselves.

It would be a big problem to bring them, who were living good lives, to test something.

To enter Valhalla, one had to first die.

In addition, what would happen to their lives if they couldn't use the sagas when they were brought to Valhalla? Would they get taken back to the underworld of Tae Ho's world, or would they get thrown to Niflheim, the otherworld of Asgard?

‘That wouldn't happen.’

It didn't seem like Odin or Freya didn't know something that Heimstream did. In addition, even if he didn't know Odin, he had

met Freya several times. It didn't seem like she would casually do something that cruel.

Tae Ho calmed himself and thought of another thing. It was because he'd formed a new doubt after listening to Heimstream's story.

Asgard's saga, Erin's geass, and the sentence of the Milesians, Olympus's task, the energy of the Temple.

Then, what was the power of the world Tae Ho grew up in?

'It wouldn't be something like science, right?'

There was magic that could be compared to science in Asgard and also in Erin and Olympus.

'Let's think about it slowly.'

It wasn't a problem that would get solved by thinking about it. Tae Ho grew resolute and then stroked Adenmaha's head that was looking at him with worried eyes.

"Anyways, let's go, our good and pretty Adenmaha."

"Uh, it's a humph."

Adenmaha snorted like always, but she failed this time. Tae Ho felt like he had heard a melting voice and then spoke to Cuchulainn excitedly.

"Isn't the effect really great? I should also use it on Heda."

'What should I say? What's the reasoning for using it on an adversary if you can't check the effect of the rune? You aren't confident?'

Tae Ho took Adenmaha and got out of the palace while hearing Cuchulainn's rebuke. The first one that greeted them was certainly Hildegarde.

"Did you come?"

"Yes. I'm sorry to have made you wait for too long."

“How can that be? Let’s ride the carriage. I will lead you to your lodging.”

She replied skillfully and then glanced at Adenmaha and said something to the Valkyrie that was near her. It seemed like they had started to search the surroundings as Adenmaha had suddenly disappeared.

Tae Ho took Adenmaha, who was still trying to snort, and then got on the carriage. But it was then that Tae Ho turned his eyes unconsciously. It was because a strong urge that couldn’t be explained made him do that.

The direction which pulled at Tae Ho’s attention—

The front lines of Asgard lay in that place.

< Episode 34 – Vanaheim (4) > End

Episode 34/Chapter 5: Vanaheim (5)

Asgard was different to the world Tae Ho used to live in.

Gods and magic actually existed, and it was a word that had an invisible strength and even made prophecies.

Because of that, Tae Ho couldn't shake away the uneasiness that passed through his chest.

‘What’s wrong?’

“Master?”

Cuchulainn and Adenmaha asked almost at the same time, but Tae Ho just frowned instead of answering either of them.

‘It must be an illusion, right?’

This place was Vanaheim. It was a place that was harder to communicate with than even Midgard, a realm being protected by the Great Barrier.

There were several mysteries in Asgard. That’s why uneasiness was like having a premonition backed up with proof.

Like having sensed a change from faraway or a force was transmitted like a current of water.

“Master, are you hurt somewhere?”

Adenmaha asked with a worried voice and then put her hand on Tae Ho’s forehead.

‘Rather than worry, it seems like you are feeling more excited and happy at the contact.’

The jab didn’t reach Adenmaha, fortunately. Because of that, Adenmaha was enjoying her happy time but soon regained her composure and tilted her head.

“You don’t have a fever.”

“I’m fine. I was just thinking of another thing.”

Tae Ho pushed away Adenmaha's hand as he had also gotten a hold of himself and said. It seemed like it really was a delusion.

‘Hm, did you feel something uneasy?’

“That's right....but I don't think it's something much. Or a mistake.”

The door of the carriage opened up as he answered Cuchulainn. It was Hildegarde, that had finished searching the surroundings.

“We will depart immediately.”

Hildegarde simply revealed her business and then rode on a horse instead of entering the carriage and started to take the lead. The warriors of Freya's legion also rode on their horses and took an escorting formation.

“Depart!”

The carriage and the escort group started to move at Hildegarde's terse order. And then, Cuchulainn spoke once again.

‘Even if it bothers you, it must have been a delusion like you said. Rest for now. You must already be familiar with the divine power of the previous Idun, but that isn't the case with Bragi-nim's. Perhaps, a flaw was created in your soul and body while receiving an unfamiliar divine power.’

“Yes, that is also possible.”

It was a really convincing story. As Tae Ho nodded at Cuchulainn's words, Adenmaha, after guessing their conversation, said,

“Master, are you going to rest now? You said that we would depart tomorrow morning, right?”

“That is the schedule Hildegarde set up for us. It's barely noon, but they would go to make preparations to sail once again. Being shut in our rooms will be helping them.”

It took about four days by ship to come to Vanaheim from Freya's

legion. It may take a similar time when they returned, so they needed the process to check the condition and objects of the ship.

In addition, the warriors of Freya's legion weren't Steel Warriors. They also needed time to release their fatigue of travelling.

“Umm, then don't we have to bring back Merlin's belongings?”

Adenmaha looked up at Tae Ho next to him and said carefully. She growled against Scathach like a cat to a dog-Of course, this was only what she thought, but when others saw them, they saw that Adenmaha suffered one sidedly-but she was in a really good relation with Merlin.

In addition, if she took something, be it small or big, it became of help to Tae Ho and Idun's legion.

So whatever the case, Adenmaha had started to think about managing the legion after she became a Valkyrie of Idun.

Tae Ho really treasured Adenmaha, but Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and said,

‘What else do you want to take from here? Just sweep it all.’

They had already retrieved more than many dozens of weapons from the trace of the Great War.

Tae Ho drew a smile and looked at Adenmaha.

“It would certainly be good if we can make some time....and we even know the general location from what we heard from Merlin.”

It seemed like it would certainly be good to retrieve it now that they were in Vanaheim.

Adenmaha smirked as Tae Ho agreed but then said with a regretful voice,

“If we knew we were going to come to Vanaheim, it would have been good if Merlin came with us.”

Tae Ho thought of the same thing, but he couldn't do anything about it at this point. As the visit to Freya's residence itself was too sudden, he should be glad that he had at least brought Adenmaha.

"Well, you shouldn't worry too much. He has already retrieved the most important thing that was in Vanaheim."

"You are speaking about Gallatin, right?"

"Right. Gallatin. That's one of the most precious objects among the ones Merlin hid in Vanaheim. The other ones are somewhat good, but even so, they won't be normal as they have been through Merlin's hands."

Merlin was a strong magician and an excellent blacksmith. Even the mass-produced Liberatuses boasted of a performance that was much superior than average magical tools.

But of course, Tae Ho's battle power wouldn't increase by having a few more mass-produced Liberatuses but it was different for Idun's legion. If he distributed Merlin's weapons to the new warriors, then their individual battle prowesses and survivability rates would increase exponentially.

'Then you should just take it now. When else will you come to Vanaheim? The path to here is that far and harsh.'

It was a distance that took over a week even if one rode a fast ship. Tae Ho nodded.

"I was going to request to Hildegarde when we reached our lodging as it would be good if we had a guide."

He heard the general story from Merlin, but it was still an unfamiliar path for them. If there was someone that was knowledgeable of this land, then searching the secret investigation lab of Merlin would be much easier.

Adenmaha listened to Tae Ho's words and said in a good mood,

"We have to eat lunch, so let's go slowly. It's not that anyone is

chasing after us, right? I'm also curious as to what they eat in Vanaheim."

It seemed like Adenmaha was looking at the secret lab of Merlin as going on an excursion.

Tae Ho's eyes remained on Adenmaha. The inside of the carriage was bright, but humming next to Tae Ho made her seem like a cat.

"Now that I see Adenmaha, don't you have motion sickness for being in the carriage?"

Because the sea and the carriage moved the same.

Adenmaha had rejected looking at Tae Ho in the face, pretending to have gotten sea sick.

Adenmaha blinked with a surprised face at his question and barely managed to open her mouth.

"Uh....now, now that I see I slightly.....huugh?"

Adenmaha slightly closed her eyes and leaned towards Tae Ho, and Cuchulainn criticized her as always.

'She acts disgustingly bad.'

But still, Cuchulainn was being considerate of her as he spoke in a voice so low Tae Ho didn't hear it.

At that moment, Tae Ho thought about using the 'Eyes of the Dragon' but then changed his thoughts. He fixed his sitting posture and then pulled Adenmaha to make her lie down sideways. And obviously, Adenmaha's head landed on Tae Ho's thigh.

"Rest. I will tell you when we arrive."

"Yees."

Adenmaha covered her face with her long hair while answering.

Tae Ho stroked the head of Adenmaha and looked at the front once again. He didn't get the uneasy feeling like before, but it was still hard to look away.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

Tae Ho prayed in a low voice while looking at the newly engraved rune of Idun in his wrist and slowly closed his eyes.

—

Siri stood in the hall of Valhalla that was connected with the wooden dock and looked at a distant place. Several warriors of Ullr’s legion were lined up behind her.

They were the force that was selected to be dispatched to the front lines.

‘How regretful.’

Siri thought of Tae Ho and put on a bitter smile. It was because she wouldn’t be able to visit Idun’s legion for a few months while she was away in the front lines. Having departed from him without saying a proper farewell was really regretful.

But right at that moment-

“Heey Siri.”

“Bracky.”

Siri looked at the direction the voice was heard at and smiled. Bracky, who was bigger than the already massive warriors, smirked and approached her.

“It’s been a while. Did you rest well?”

“Somewhat. What about you?”

“I had a fun time in Anaheim.”

Bracky laughed treacherously and looked at a distant place. Siri let out a sigh reflexively at him, who looked like a fool, and then shook her head and started to imitate Heda.

“So that was the case. You had a fun time. How good of you.”

She had learned from Heda because she had said that it had great effects and that really was the case.

“Wh, what is it? I feel like i’m being treated like a moron.”

There certainly wasn’t a curse mixed in her words.

Siri just looked at him with lukewarm eyes instead of explaining to him, and Bracky couldn’t endure it anymore.

“A-anyways! We got to be together this time, too. Don’t you think that there’s a solid tie between us?”

“Well, it’s not that there is none.”

Actually, it wasn’t that she had been in almost all the battlefields like with Tae Ho, but she had still been in quite a lot of battlefields with Bracky.

Just taking into account the time they had spent in an expedition, Tae Ho came first and Bracky would be the second. Rolph, who hadn’t been with her recently, would take third place.

While Siri was counting the numbers by herself, Bracky looked at his surroundings and then blinked and asked,

“Isn’t that Tae Ho guy here? He has almost always been with you. Or went with Ullr’s legion.”

Because the one-man-army of Idun’s legion couldn’t go out on an expedition alone. Tae Ho had always joined in another legion for an expedition since he was a lowest-ranked warrior, especially in Ullr’s legion.

But of course, the situation had changed now. Tae Ho had become the commander and new warriors had entered Idun’s legion.

But even so, Bracky just ignored that fact. It was because the new warriors were all lowest-ranked and it was impossible for them to stand on the same battlefield as Tae Ho, a superior-ranked warrior.

Siri didn’t answer immediately and checked her surroundings and then approached Bracky and said in a low voice,

“He went to Vanaheim after receiving a call from Freya-nim.”

It was something that shouldn't be hidden, but it still wasn't something that could be said openly.

Bracky thought of the beautiful face of Freya at the words of 'Freya's orders' and drooled like a fool, and Siri looked at him once more with lukewarm eyes.

And a few seconds later, Bracky said after he barely managed to regain his bearings.

"Mm, he's quite busy lately. Is it different if you are a commander of a legion?"

"Of course. And Tae Ho is a superior-ranked warrior while we are still intermediate-ranked."

At first, Siri was an inferior-ranked warrior and Tae Ho was at the lowest rank but when did this gap get created?

Siri put on a bitter expression unconsciously, but Bracky didn't follow suit. He rather snorted and said bravely,

"Good, good. We will catch up to him soon. Siri, you should also work hard as you will want to be with him from now on."

"Let's work hard."

Siri thought why the warriors of the mortal world liked Bracky. An existence that gave one strength just by being with him. Someone that was like a vitamin.

Siri laughed and tried to speak about the frontlines that they were about to go to. Siri had already gone once when she was an inferior-ranked warrior, but it was the first time for Bracky.

But of course, they had stayed in the fortress next to the front lines, but that was rather like visiting as guests instead of protecting it like warriors. There could only be a difference in it.

But it was when Siri was about to open her mouth.

"Siri! Bracky!"

“Ingrid-nim?”

They turned their heads to look at the urgent call and saw that Ingrid was fast approaching them. She, who didn't normally have any change in her stone-like expression, was putting on a face with perplexity and anxiousness.

“The two of you, follow me. It's an urgent task.”

Siri and Bracky turned to look at themselves at the sudden order, and it was at that moment—

The sound of a horn trumpet was heard from a far place.

It was the signal indicating an emergency.

—

Skuld, who was flying towards Vanaheim, twisted her body in the air. She transformed from a swan back into a woman and then looked at the direction the front lines was at.

She was the future.

She was the one that reviewed the thread of fate made by the past Uld and the present Verdandi.

The uncertain future one faced no matter how many times they untied the thread and made it anew.

Skuld transformed into a swan once again. She flew towards Vanaheim, as she didn't have much time anymore.

—

The God of Thunder, Thor, glared at the front lines and the God of Hunting, Ullr, clenched his lips at the roars that was heard from far away.

The roars of beasts.

The cry of a predator that made one's organs freeze.

They were similar to a wolf's, but Ullr shook his head. It wasn't Fenrir. The roar of the world wolf wasn't that weak.

The canine of hell, Garmr.

The beast that got out of the hands of Hela.

It wasn't complete, but wasn't weak either. It was the strongest and biggest roar that was heard since Asgard has started searching for the soul fragments.

"It's not only one soul fragment."

Ullr said, and Thor understood his words.

The number of Garmr's soul fragments that Odin had estimated numbered about fifteen.

Among them, Asgard had merely attained six of them.

There wasn't a clear method for Asgard to know how many fragments the giants had gathered and how many more they have acquired.

"But it's still incomplete."

It wasn't to the point to wake up the world wolf that was in its long slumber. They hadn't gathered that amount of fragments yet.

But it had certainly drawn near. If even one or two more fragments were added, the thing they were deathly afraid of could certainly happen.

Thor felt doubt. Why did the giants wake up Garmr when they didn't have enough soul fragments? Just why did they reveal the fact that they had gathered almost enough fragments?

"Thor! Ullr!"

A voice was heard from behind, and the two of them turned around hurriedly. Hermod, the younger brother of the two and the God of Wind and Messages, hurriedly landed on the fortress of the front lines. He, who had the look of a youth, reported to the two Gods.

Things were happening in Midgard.

The roar of Garmr was spread once more, and the giants in the front lines started to move.

—

Hugin and Munin were currently in Midgard.

The two crows transmitted to Odin what they heard and seen from the sky.

There were changes occurring in several places of Midgard. It was a similar thing that happened when Garmr's soul fragment was discovered.

In addition, it wasn't only one or two this time. About five soul fragments were emanating its strong presence at the same time.

The distance among them was far. It wasn't close at all. It was impossible to retrieve all of them at once with just the warriors that were down in Midgard.

Odin, who was sitting in front of Mimir's lake, gazed at the head of Mimir.

The head of Mimir, which was on top of a wide and plain boulder, opened its mouth and spoke.

It was a story he had kept repeating since long before, and that didn't change much but there was a variable added into it.

Odin agreed. The several crows aside of Hugin and Munin told him of the many things that were happening in Midgard and Asgard.

Giants were appearing in Midgard. Now that the fomoiros had disappeared, there was only one person that could do what they did.

The God of Fire and Lies, Loki.

Odin saved his words for a moment. He looked at a distant place and said with a bitter smile.

“It’s finally started.”

The time has arrived now.

Odin stood up from his place. He didn’t stay seated anymore.

Gungnir.

The spear of Odin that boasted an absolute accuracy. A strong weapon suitable for the King of Gods.

He could hear the voice of Freya searching for him urgently, and the voices of Thor and Heimdall were also heard.

The head of Mimir spoke once again.

And Odin didn’t speak back this time. He looked at a distant place with his only eye and then placed the horn trumpet he was carrying on his waist in his mouth.

He’d been the God of War before the King of Gods.

Odin blew the horn trumpet.

It announced the start of war.

< Episode 34 – Vanaheim (5) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 1: Great War (1)

A hundred years had passed since the Great War.

That time wasn't short even for the Gods that could live thousands or tens of thousands of years. Although it was short when compared to their life spans, it wasn't so for the collective races.

As time flowed fairly for both humans and Gods, the Gods also felt the time flowing slowly.

A hundred years.

A period of more than thirty thousand years.

In that time, the Gods of Asgard and the giants of Jotunheim stood at the boundaries of the destroyed Erin and Asgard and glared at each other.

The battle hadn't ended. There had been no big battles that would break the balance of the scale, but the small battles kept occurring repeatedly.

Because of that, the giants now showing some movements at the front lines wasn't that big of a deal. The frost giants had always moved troops tens of times a year and provoked Asgard continuously.

But it was a bit different this time.

It wasn't only because Garmr's soul fragments appeared in a bunch.

The God of Thunder, Thor, stood on the walls of the front lines and glared at the giants, and a grand sound that wasn't inferior to rumbling thunder echoed out.

Thor knew his voice.

The God of Hunting, Ullr, who stood beside Thor, had also heard his voice a long time ago.

The God of Messages, Hermod, rode on the wind. He was riding towards the direction the sound was heard with the eight-legged horse, Sleipnir.

Hermod remembered the day he'd first heard that sound. That day was an unforgettable one.

A hundred years ago.

The day the fire of Muspelheim's king, Surtr, burned down Erin.

The day the Great War started.

The sound of the horn trumpet shook heaven and earth, and it grew even louder as it neared Valhalla.

Hermod looked behind him. Thanks to the speed of Sleipnir, faster than the wind, the walls of the front lines were soon at a great distance.

However, Hermod had eyes that could see thousands of miles away, and he could clearly see the unfolding events at the walls as if they were right before him.

The warriors were moving. They were taking their weapons and forming ranks upon the walls. The Valkyries urged those warriors and raised the flags of their legions.

It was a scene that made one's chest burn, a really trustworthy sight.

However, Hermod gulped dry saliva unconsciously. He forcefully turned his eyes away from the walls as it was hard to see it even with his eyes that could gaze a thousand miles away.

Uneasiness was sprouting from a part of his chest, and this was something he had already been through once.

‘The Great War.’

Hermod didn't think anymore. His eyes were looking toward Valhalla.

—

A huge fortress existed on top of the rainbow-like Bifrost that connected Asgard and Midgard.

The protector God that guarded the strong fortress, that was able to easily block tens of thousands of enemies, was Heimdall.

He heard the sound of the horn trumpet from Valhalla.

He, who could even hear the fur of sheeps growing, could know more clearly than anyone where the sound came from and who had blown the horn trumpet.

It was the King of Gods, Odin.

He was blowing the horn trumpet in the lake of Mimir that was connected with a root of the world tree Yggdrasil, and was climbing up.

Heimdall closed his ears for a moment and looked in front of him. The Valkyries were gathering, and the warriors of Heimdall's legion were hurriedly running to several places of the fortress.

The front lines of Asgard weren't the only places that a problem had occurred.

There were also changes occurring in Midgard. Even though they had killed Bress, King of the fomioires, with a great surprise attack and cleaned up their remains, giants were still appearing in several places of Midgard.

The representative Valkyrie of Heimdall's legion, Herpiortr, hit her chest twice and expressed etiquette. She, who had red hair like flames and was the owner of the legion, looked at her master's eyes Heimdall fixedly.

Heimdall nodded to her. He just hit his chest twice instead of saying anything and then went towards the highest place of Bifrost.

The King of Gods, Odin, blew the horn trumpet and transmitted

his will, and it then became the turn of Heimdall to make the final declaration.

To use the horn trumpet of war, Gjallarhorn.... They'd hoped they wouldn't ever use it again but knew they'd inevitably have to one day.

Heimdall blew Gjallarhorn.

He notified Asgard and the other realms that the Great War had restarted.

—

Helga raised her head. She, the princess of Kataron, brave shieldmaiden, and a loyal believer of Idun, started to drip cold sweat from her forehead. Her black hair that was always brushed prettily was now disheveled and being shaken by the wind.

“Princess?”

“It's nothing.”

She answered at the voice mixed with worry that was heard from next to her and looked at the sky. She thought she had heard the sound of a horn trumpet, but it seemed like it was an illusion.

She was now riding on a horse, and the shield maidens and warriors that were riding next to her were the elites of Kataron. They, who had participated on the subjugation of the evil fomiores following the warrior of Idun, were now hurriedly returning to the castle of Kataron.

Originally, it had to be an enjoyable trip. Helga had set up quite a lot of military exploits in the expeditions she had been together with Idun's warrior. But of course, they were so small that was embarrassing to compare them to the achievements made by the great warriors of Valhalla, although it was because they were the ones being compared.

The warriors of King Ivar that had accompanied Helga were

proud of the achievements set by their princess. Helga couldn't say it in front of others, but she was waiting for the day she could boast of her achievements in front of the warrior of Idun.

It was regrettable that she couldn't enter Valhalla, but she had won and was returning with her loved ones. She also had her siblings to boast about her achievements.

However, Helga placed all of that in a corner of her heart. It was because something more urgent and important was happening in front of them.

Giants appeared in the mountains and rivers.

The evil spirits that were born from Ymir's blood climbed up from under the ground and attacked the villages and cities.

It wasn't something that was happening in one place but in all the region. Someone had even said that Ragnarok had started.

What would have happened with her hometown, Kataron? Was her father, King Ivar, safe?

Helga thought of the faces of her siblings and the citizens and then gritted her teeth and kicked her horse.

She had to hurry.

—

Siri and Bracky followed Ingrid. The three people that departed from the wooden dock went for one of the rooms located in the middle hall of Valhalla.

The sound of a horn trumpet was heard by the three people that were running hurriedly. One was heard from inside of Valhalla, and the other one was heard from outside.

Siri and Bracky knew instinctively what the two sounds meant.

Ingrid gulped the silence at the fact that the things she had heard from her senior Valkyries was happening once again right now.

The sound that was heard from outside was certainly the sound of the trumpet of war, Gjallarhorn.

Gjallarhorn was a really special horn trumpet. The sound of it had rang out once throughout the long history of Valhalla.

And it could only be like that. Because Gjallarhorn wasn't simply a horn trumpet that notified of an urgent situation.

Mobilizing all the forces of Valhalla.

Starting from the lowest-ranked warriors to the top rank and even the oldest Steel Warriors that had been slumbering for a long time all without exception.

The fuss at their surroundings became amplified. The sounds of chains were heard endlessly at a far away place, and toothed wheels clashed with each other and made a machine-like sound.

The door was opening.

The 540 gates that were covering Valhalla in a circle, those located at the walls.

Ingrid, who had stopped for a moment, urged Siri and Bracky on once more. It wasn't the time to be absentminded.

“Let's go. We have to hurry.”

Siri didn't ask where they were going to, and Bracky realized instinctively why he had also gotten called with Siri when he belonged to another legion.

There were already people that had arrived on the path that connected to Heimdall's fortress. They were faces that Siri and Bracky already knew well.

Notung, the warrior of Heimdall's legion.

Harabal, the warrior of Njord's legion.

But there weren't only the two of them. All the intermediate-ranked warriors that had been in the expedition of Midgard were

gathered.

“We will hurriedly go to Midgard.”

Ingrid said.

The warriors of Valhalla didn't speak anymore and followed her.

The sound of Gjallarhorn was approaching.

—

Freya, who was riding on the cat carriage, was a mess. She was wearing a pijama that revealed underneath as she had just woken up after hearing the sound of the horn trumpet. She couldn't fix her plentiful and pretty hair and it flowed down her shoulders instead.

But of course, she was still the Goddess of Beauty. She was emitting a different charm as it wasn't her usual self.

But it wasn't the time to be minding about that.

Freya covered herself roughly with the black coat a Valkyrie brought her and then hit the air with a whip made with the skin of a sea serpent. The cats became surprised at that sound and started to run in the air.

‘Ugh, really.’

Freya bit her lips. She did expect that something would happen, but for Gjallarhorn to be the one to ring....

In addition, Odin was also another case. There was no way for him, the God of Magic and Prophecy, to not have seen anything coming.

‘He should have told me something!’

He is always stuck in the lake of Mimir!

But of course, Freya herself knew that venting her anger was useless as Odin also wasn't omniscient.

The thread of fate made by the three sisters and the result the

head of Mimir came up after calculating countless variables wasn't absolute.

The Gods of Asgard were like that.

They were called as Gods but weren't absolute. They were existences that couldn't maintain eternal life without the golden apple of Idun.

Mortal instead of immortal.

Incomplete instead of complete.

That's why they could only fear the future. They could live on fierce lives like the existences in Midgard.

Freya shook her head. Thinking about useless things on urgent situations was one of her old weaknesses.

She took a deep breath and then rolled her fingers. She obtained information through the several magical networks she had spread in Asgard.

"It's an utter mess."

She cursed out unconsciously.

The battle in the front lines still hadn't started, but it was like a kettle that was about to overflow.

Giants and evil spirits were appearing in Midgard. In addition, their number was overwhelming.

'Damn it. It's full of holes just like a torn rag. Just who the hell made it!'

Freya cursed the Great Barrier of Midgard for a moment and then had a moment of self criticism and rolled her fingers again.

It was certain that a bunch of Garmr's soul fragments had appeared in the front lines, and it was seen that a few of them also appeared in Midgard.

'World wolf.'

Freya bit her lips. She called out the nickname of the existence that was uneasy and scary to say out loud.

She pondered. She used her intelligent head to think about what she should do from now on.

She had to first meet Odin.

Freya was the landlady of Asgard. The conversation she was to have with Odin wasn't about how they would fight in the front lines.

‘Midgard.’

They had to stop the resurrection of the world wolf. They had to dispatch warriors to Midgard and retrieve all of the soul fragments.

‘Loki.’

It would probably be his doing. She didn't know how the soul fragments appeared in Midgard at the same time, but she could understand the giants that appeared right after that.

It was clearly Loki. He had certainly made a hole in the Great Barrier which he and Odin had made.

Freya turned her head. The representative Valkyrie of Freya's legion, Aherid, who was riding on the cat carriage with her, noticed the eyes of her master and hurriedly faced her.

“Up to where did the commander of Idun get?”

Freya was usually gentle and kind to the people below her, but her voice right now was sharp because of the situation.

Aherid hurriedly said,

“He's vigorously flying over here with a coffin of Vanaheim.”

It wasn't easy to use communication magic because of the sea of Ymir that was between Vanaheim and Asgard, but this was an emergency situation.

They had already transmitted to him the situation's urgency with a really strong magic. As the sound of Gjallarhorn transcended time and space, Vanaheim would also act without pause.

He would come flying.

Freya nodded as she knew what that meant. It wouldn't take too long then.

"Let's meet the King for now."

She talked to himself as if trying to calm herself down and then hit the air with the whip once again. The cats increased their speed.

—

Hildegarde remained in Vanaheim.

And that was the same for the legion of Freya that had come with her.

The only one that was allowed to move with Idun's commander was Adenmaha, a Valkyrie of Idun's legion.

Hildegarde breathed roughly after hearing the sound of Gjallarhorn. Skuld, who'd arrived almost at the same time as the emergency notice, looked up the sky next to her.

A black thing was crossing the sky.

The thing that departed from Vanaheim was like a thread of a Black Flash.

'Let him reach in time.'

Skuld prayed inwardly, and Hildegarde and the warriors of Freya's legion did the same.

And high in the sky, where the hopes of everyone reached, Adenmaha was letting out a scream.

"Kyaaaaaaaak!"

'Don't you think her scream is mixed with happiness?'

Because both Tae Ho and Adenmaha were packed in a coffin meant for only one person.

However, Cuchulainn was wrong this time. Adenmaha was sincerely crying and screaming. Tears flowed down from her white face that had become pale because of the fright.

Tae Ho embraced her tightly so that she could calm down and perhaps, a part of her scream was because it hurt.

However, Tae Ho didn't plan on letting go of Adenmaha. No, precisely speaking he couldn't even think.

Because it was too fast.

It was a pain that they felt like they would die because of the increase in gravity, but a vague feeling was sweeping up his body that couldn't be explained by words.

The thing Tae Ho and Adenmaha were riding on was a prototype of the Black Flash.

It was faster than the Black Flash made after that, but it didn't take into account the comfortability of the passenger even by a little and was a test prototype that made one doubt if it really was made for a person.

Tae Ho put more strength in his arms and yelled unconsciously.

“M-my lower body feels weiiiiiiiiird!”

The scream of despair he had once heard from a warrior.

The prototype of the Black Flash crossed the sea of Ymir.

< Episode 35 – Great War (1) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 2: Great War (2)

Time passed.

Even though the sound of Gjallarhorn was heard once again after a hundred years, the passage of time was the same as always.

It wasn't faster or slower than usual.

The Gods and commanders were gathered in the front lines.

The God of Thunder, Thor, wore an armor and helmet made with Uts and clenched Mjolnir.

Next to him, the God of Hunting, Ullr, touched his golden bow. It was a strong, magical bow he had received from the Goddess of the Moon, Artemis, and Olympus's God of hunting as a token of their friendship.

The one-armed Tir, who wasn't in the same place but was looking at them from a not too distant land, glared down at the fortress.

The giants had come out of their fortress made with ice and rocks and were marching. There was still quite a distance between them, but it was only a matter of time until they reached the range of Asgard.

The front lines of Asgard were really wide.

And giants and evil spirits were pouring out as if planning to cover it all up.

The frost giants were thinking of doing an all out war.

It was a really sudden march, but at the same time, they knew too well that it would happen someday.

"We are ready."

Thor said. He said that for the warriors and Ullr who were next to him, but also for himself.

And those words weren't only meant to be heard well.

Thor placed his eyes off the front lines and looked at his surroundings. There were already tens of thousands of warriors of Valhalla gathered in the fortress Thor was at.

If one also counted the warriors in the other fortresses, they would amount to hundreds of thousands.

In addition, this wasn't the complete force of Asgard and Valhalla.

The Steel Warriors that were in a deep slumber were waking up.

The warriors that were waiting in Valhalla were hurrying to go to war.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Thor spoke naturally. He hit his chest twice, and the warriors near him did the same thing. He then addressed all the warriors gathered in the fortress.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

The sound of Gjallarhorn that was heard from far away started to ring.

The time for war was approaching.

—

A root of Yggdrasil, the World Tree, that connected Midgard and Asgard, also reached Valhalla.

Hermod, who'd returned to the front lines of Valhalla, didn't participate in the conference between the Gods or encourage his warriors but kept riding with his horse instead. It was because he still had something to do as the God of Messages.

Sleipnir, the horse that was born from the God Loki and a female horse long ago, was the fastest horse in Valhalla and also in all of

Asgard.

It's eight legs kicked the air and split the wind. Hermod kept riding on top of the World Tree and finally got out of Asgard. He passed the passageway that connected to Midgard and entered the underground.

Below Midgard, the world of the living, was Niflheim, the world of the dead.

That land that was filled with frost had the city of Helheim in it. Helheim was the city of souls that'd died from illness or age and didn't die in the battlefield.

Hermod went towards Helheim and looked at the several places of Niflheim. Fortunately enough, he couldn't see the traces of the giants.

Sleipnir lowered its speed. It was because the residence of the queen, that was surging in the middle of Helheim, wasn't that far away.

There were two entrances in the residence of the queen that looked like a winter tree that had no leaves. Hermod directed to the garden hanging in the air in the peak of the residence instead of going to the entrance in the ground.

The plains that were connected with the second entrance to the residence appeared. Compared to a normal garden that was filled with various colors, this garden was dyed in only one color.

White.

It was cold and lonely but gave a trim feeling.

Sleipnir landed on the garden. White, hot steam gushed from its mouth as it caught its breath.

Hermod jumped down the saddle and took a deep breath. There was a woman wearing black clothes standing alone in the middle of the garden.

“Messenger Hermod of the King of Gods, Odin, greets the queen of Helheim. It’s been a while.”

Hermod stopped ten steps before the woman and expressed etiquette first. The woman that was looking at the ice flowers that had bloomed in her garden turned around to look at Hermod.

“It has been a while, Messenger God Hermod.”

She was a mystical woman. She, who had black hair that seemed like it would gulp down everything, had looks that were difficult to describe.

It wasn’t about being pretty or not.

She was seen as a cute girl. But when one saw her again, they could see that there was a beautiful lady standing there. If they blinked once more, they would see that she was an old lady that was in the brink of death.

Her voice was also like that. Every time she spoke, it gave the feeling that one was listening to the voice of different ages.

The owner of Helheim and the queen of the dead, Hela.

Hermod had met her once after the Great War, just like right now.

It was to ask her of a method to bring back the several dead ones that had died in the Great War including the God of Light, Baldur.

But it was impossible. Helheim was only a place where the souls of the dead humans resided for a short time. The soul of Gods didn’t reach Helheim. Hela was the queen of the dead ones, not the queen of death. She didn’t have the power to control life and death.

Hermod, who had fallen into a great frustration after the Great War, vented his anger on Hela.

He poured out all kinds of curses asking why she wasn’t resurrecting the dead ones, and if she wasn’t going to do that, why

was she in her seat of responsibility.

It was an embarrassing memory. He apologized politely after that, and even though Hela had forgiven him saying that it was completely understandable, Hermod couldn't raise his head properly every time he met her.

And it was even more so this time.

The reason why Hermod had come to Helheim wasn't to ask Hela how she was doing.

"You don't have to worry. Compared to my brothers, my heart belongs to Asgard."

Hela smiled and spoke first as Hermod hesitated to speak.

That dry smile resembled a branch of the winter tree branch.

When the Great War was coming to a close, the God of Lies and Fire, Loki, betrayed Asgard and stood at the side of the giants.

The sons of Loki, the World Wolf, Fenrir, and the Space Snake, Jormungand, were also threatening foes to Asgard.

It was obvious for Asgard to be suspicious of Hela as her father and brothers had all turned against Asgard.

"I'm sorry. I know better than anyone what you think about Asgard."

Hermod said sincerely. Hela had already proved her loyalty towards Asgard several times. Just the army of the deceased that was filling the empty spot of Valhalla was proof of that.

"You don't have to worry as you are merely doing your task."

She answered in a low voice and slowly rolled her fingers. She drew a rune in the air and showed it to Hermod.

"A troop of the deceased is gathering in Naglfar. If Asgard calls for them, I will dispatch them at any time."

The warship, Naglfar, made with the nails of the deceased.

Hermod nodded. He purposely revealed a bright smile and said,
“I’m really grateful. I will certainly transmit to Odin about your unchanging heart.”

Hela smiled faintly once again. She formed a fist with her slender fingers and then hit her chest twice.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Hermod expressed etiquette and then hesitated a bit before mounting Sleipnir.

“Don’t leave your residence. You will be safe if you stay in Helheim.”

“I will pray for your safety.”

Hela said with a gentle voice. Hermod nodded once again and then departed with Sleipnir.

The horse with eight legs kicked the air. Hela just saw the back of Hermod leaving the garden and then looked at an even farther place.

“Father.”

The God of Fire and Lies, Loki.

Midgard was at the end of Hela’s eyes.

—

When Freya arrived at the central hall of Valhalla after crossing the fog lake, she got down the cat carriage and walked. The sound of the horn trumpet that was heard outside and inside of Valhalla made her feel complicated.

“Whew, whew. Calm down. Let’s calm down, Freya.”

Freya looked at the entrance of the conference room of the Gods and mumbled in a low voice. There was nothing good by getting excited. It was important to calm down and think calmly the more

urgent the situation was.

‘You are already the best beauty in Asgard and the Nine Realms, but you will become an even more beautiful woman if you fix your rash temperament.’

Those were the words her brother had said long ago. She was already the greatest beauty but would become even more beautiful. His words were a mess, but she didn’t dislike hearing it. Freya really liked the words of her brother.

‘Ah, really.’

She was trying to calm down herself but now she was about to get depressed.

Because her brother, Freyr, wasn’t in this world anymore. He had lost his life in the Great War.

Freyr wasn’t the only one that had disappeared. Freya’s husband, Odr, had also died in the Great War. He was a really heartless and foolish man. He had the most beautiful woman in Asgard and the Nine Realms as his wife and roamed the worlds with the desire to travel.

‘It’s all in the past.’

Freya closed her eyes and opened them. Instead of becoming a woman that cried for tragic love, she acted confidently as the landlady of Asgard.

The warriors that were protecting the door of the conference room grew enchanted by Freya’s beauty even in this urgent situation. They opened the door only after being urged by the representative Valkyrie of Freya’s legion, Aherid, and when Freya entered the room, she could feel the Gods concentrating on her.

“Freya.”

“Freya.”

There were both male and female Gods, and all of them were

trembling in fear. It was understandable as the one in this place had a long distance from battle and war.

The Gods that had legions and were capable of battling were already out in the front lines.

Half of the Gods didn't come to this place as they were busy taking preparations for leading the reserve corps that were in Valhalla, and the other half remained silent.

Freya remained silent.

She just looked at the various places of the conference room instead of facing the weak Gods that wanted to hear words of comfort from her.

Excluding the few Gods like Idun that couldn't get out of their residence, almost all of them were gathered here. If only the King of Gods, Odin arrived, they would be able to start with the conference.

"It's fine. There are no problems. We prepared many things after the Great War."

Freya sat in the second highest seat and said some words of comfort towards the scared Gods.

She was inwardly saying so to bless their warriors at least one more time instead of crying like this, but what came out of her mouth were gentle and beautiful words.

'And why isn't this man coming?'

It was when Freya was battling against her patience and anxiousness that the King of Gods Odin finally arrived the conference room. All the eyes that were looking at Freya moved to Odin.

The King of Gods, Odin, had several nicknames.

He was the God of Magic and Prophecies and was also a wanderer God that roamed the world endlessly.

But right now, the one that stood in front of them was the God of War. He'd armed himself completely with equipment made of Unts and there was the Absolute Spear, Gungnir, in his hands.

The Gods stayed silent. They couldn't say their worries just like they had done with Freya. They just shut their mouths and remained still.

Odin passed over that silence. He sat on the seat that was next to Freya and then said shortly, "The Great War has resumed."

Odin claimed. Some of the Gods put pained expressions at his words.

It was because they thought that it was in its early stages, but they weren't able to correct it.

The giants had started to move in the front lines, and droves of them were appearing in several places of Midgard, but it wasn't that they had clashed yet.

But that was only a dream, for the King of Gods, Odin, had claimed that the Great War had resumed.

"A bunch of Garmr's soul fragments appeared in the front lines. We can also see that several of them appeared in Midgard."

Odin kept explaining the situation.

"A battle will soon occur in the front lines, but that isn't our battlefield. We can't ignore Midgard. We can't let the giants put their hands on the soul fragments and awaken the World Wolf. We can't permit them trampling on the humans of Midgard."

Someone gulped dry saliva and another wanted to speak about the Great Barrier of Midgard.

Odin stayed silent for a moment. He gathered the eyes of the Gods and then said briefly, "We are removing the Great Barrier of Midgard."

The great barrier had already a lot of holes in it, but of course, an

enormous difference existed between opening it up completely and merely having holes in it; however, Odin decided to do that. It was because the existence of the Great Barrier was interfering in the deployment to Midgard.

“We will dispatch forces composed of mainly superior-ranked warriors to retrieve all of the soul fragments in one go and sweep up the giants that appeared in Midgard. After that, Freya will install the Great Barrier once again.”

Regardless, the giants of Jotunheim wouldn't stay still watching.

But that was also the same for Asgard and Valhalla.

The eyes of the Gods moved to Freya. She flinched for a moment but then smiled as if telling them to relax.

“I have already prepared long ago. I can do it plentifully.”

With some meaning, her words were more comforting than the words of the King of Gods, Odin.

Freya smiled brightly once again to calm down the Gods and then glared at Odin slightly. Odin then spoke to her with his mind.

‘We will debate about the specific details when the organization finishes. Did you retrieve the chest from Vanaheim?’

‘The commander of Idun is bringing it right now. It won't take long.’

The commander of Idun.

The warrior of Idun.

Odin nodded. He turned to look at the other Gods and then ended the conference after some brief words.

—

Adenmaha didn't speak anymore. She'd loosened her body in a half unconscious state in Tae Ho's embrace, and Tae Ho still clutched Adenmaha tightly and gritted his teeth.

And after some time—

The Black Flash landed on the ground. The moment they landed, a terrible pain swept over Tae Ho and Adenmaha, but it was important that they could arrive on the ground.

‘Hey, get down, quickly! Adenmaha is about to throw up!’

Cuchulainn got surprised and yelled. Tae Ho swung his arm rashly while still being in pain to throw the door open and then took Adenmaha and got out of the Black Flash.

“Hup! Burgh!”

Adenmaha, in pain while covering her mouth, threw herself to the ground and started to vomit. Tae Ho calmed himself by taking some air and then patted on Adenmaha’s back.

‘How terrible.’

Cuchulainn sincerely sympathized with Adenmaha. It wasn’t only because she started to throw up in front of Tae Ho.

The place they had arrived was Freya’s residence in her legion. The Valkyries and warriors that were waiting for Tae Ho looked at Adenmaha heaving her guts up and Tae Ho who was patting her back.

“Here. Blow your nose.”

As Tae Ho gave her a handkerchief, Adenmaha blew her nose with a face filled with pain and embarrassment and then wiped off her mouth with another handkerchief. Her eyes were red.

And one of the Valkyries that had been looking at all of that got courage and said, “Uh, um. Are you the commander of Idun?”

She knew it but was still asking because of the formalities.

Tae Ho checked Adenmaha’s state for the last time and then stood up and faced the Valkyrie of Freya’s legion.

“I am the commander of Idun. I received an order from Freya-

nim and brought the chest of Vanaheim.”

“I am Valkyrie Hrist of Freya’s legion. Greetings to the commander of Idun.”

The Valkyrie that expressed etiquette to Tae Ho quickly continued to speak.

“Freya-nim is currently in the central hall of Valhalla. We will deliver her the chest of Vanaheim.”

The one that was entrusted with it was Tae Ho, so originally, this kind of intervention was a big rudeness; however, the situation was as it was. Tae Ho took out the chest of Vanaheim from Unnir and then gave it to Valkyrie Hrist.

“Thank you. A ship is waiting for you in the dock to bring you to Idun’s legion.”

Tae Ho nodded once again.

He would rather welcome being able to visit Idun’s legion for a moment.

“Let’s go, Adenmaha.”

Adenmaha nodded once instead of answering and then followed Tae Ho’s back. Valkyrie Sigrun and the ship of Idun’s legion was waiting for him.

“Idun-nim is waiting for you.”

There was no need to say anymore.

The ship started to head towards Idun’s residence after boarding Tae Ho and Adenmaha.

< Episode 35 – Great War (2) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 3: Great War (3)

The ships of each legion were sailing busily in the fog lake.

The sound of the horn trumpet that was heard periodically made one feel nervous by itself.

Sigrun gulped dry saliva several times with a stiff expression. While she was in the Valkyrie Training Center, she received several nicknames like Heart of Steel and The Immovable Sigrun as her expression didn't change much in any situation, and she had her tall height. But the truth was different.

She wasn't particularly brave compared to her external looks, but of course, that didn't mean that she was a coward, and it also didn't mean that she held her composure at anytime and anywhere to the point that she was outstanding amongst the Valkyries.

Sigrun didn't have many expressions. Precisely speaking, when she put a particular expression, it didn't look like her face had changed at all.

Even when she smiled brightly, it looked expressionless by the others perspectives, and they barely managed to recognize when she started to laugh excessively.

Sigrun closed her eyes and breathed. She had only gone out to one or two expeditions since she graduated from the training center, but the Great War had resumed. She couldn't say this to anyone, but it felt like her vision was darkening because of her fear.

Just what would happen from now on? She had heard that half of all Valkyries had lost their lives in the previous Great War. Would it be the same this time?

What about the warriors? The warriors of Idun's legion. The warriors that had been in the same battlefield as her and shared laughter and battle cries together.

She was afraid of losing them. Terrified. This was the first time she realized how much of a coward she was.

Sigrun forced herself to breathe once more, but no matter how many times she did so, her heart couldn't calm down.

But it was at that moment-

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

A soft feeling was felt on her forehead. The divine power of Idun that was warm and gentle began to cover her entire body starting from her forehead.

Sigrun opened her eyes while being enchanted and, just like expected, she saw Tae Ho in front of her.

“Commander-nim.”

Sigrun offered greetings. She had an expressionless face like always, but Tae Ho could vaguely comprehend what she was thinking about.

[The Scared]

[Sigrun]

Heda realized it instantly when Tae Ho used the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’, but it seemed like Sigrun didn’t notice even a little.

Tae Ho grabbed Sigrun’s hands. She became surprised and opened her eyes widely, but she didn’t fall back or take her hands away.

Tae Ho looked at her eyes fixedly and said,

“It’s alright to be scared, and it isn’t weird at all. It’s the same for me.”

Sigrun blinked and gulped dryly. She unknowingly leaned her ear towards Tae Ho’s words.

“But still, you can fight. You aren’t alone. There are others by your side.”

There was strength behind Tae Ho's words. Sigrun thought of Gudrun, who was at the training center with her. She thought of the lowest-ranked warriors saying that they would protect her in the expeditions.

"Idun should be watching over us, and our comrades will be with us, so let's be more courageous and protect ourselves with our treasured ones. You can do this, right?"

Tae Ho asked. Sigrun held her breath at his really gentle question and nodded.

"I can do it."

Tae Ho smiled once again. He let go Sigrun's hands and hit his chest twice.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

[Her nervousness has faded]

[The Determined]

[Sigrun]

Tae Ho checked on Sigrun's status and grabbed her shoulders. He blessed her one more time.

"May Idun's blessing accompany you."

"May Idun's blessing accompany you."

Sigrun blessed Tae Ho back. It was a face filled with shyness that wasn't at all like her.

"Right. Cheer up, then."

"Yes, commander-nim!"

Tae Ho patted Sigrun's shoulders and then turned away to walk towards the cabins. Cuchulainn, who'd been silent until now, said, 'It seems like you just said some random words, but her reaction is good. Is this the effect of Bragi's rune?'

It seemed like he didn't quite like the words Tae Ho had said, and he was clicking his tongue.

'Well, your brain won't be different just because you received his rune.'

The origin of one's thoughts was their brain, not their tongue.

Tae Ho grew irritated and quickly retorted,

"Hey! I still chose my words carefully. Besides, I've already seen the effects before."

His words were truthful. He had said similar words to the youngest one in his team that was trembling before the world championship of Dark Age to give him courage.

'So that was the case. That had happened before. Only I didn't know about that.'

The effect of imitating Heda was really great. Tae Ho felt worse than having heard curses and let out a sigh but then regained his composure.

Because Cuchulainn wouldn't be serious about this. He would be joking to soothe his nervousness.

'No. I'm honest.'

Cuchulainn had perfectly mastered Tae Ho's pattern of thinking by being with him for two years and added another blow for good measure.

As Tae Ho put on some lukewarm eyes, he snickered and said another thing.

'Anyways, you are gathering blessings really hard as soon as the number limit got released.'

Sigrun had come to meet Tae Ho and gave him a blessing. She had cleared all the requisites for the 'Valkyrie that had a Warrior Meet Him'.

Of course, he could only make a fake Valkyrie with a really low completion rate as he had only been blessed once, but still, it was better than having nothing.

“I have to strengthen my force even if only by a little.”

‘Right, then you should also rest. You must be exhausted because you rode on the Black Flash.’

There was a high possibility that he wouldn’t be able to rest after returning to the residence. He had to rest when he could.

Tae Ho heard Cuchulainn’s words to be correct and then lay down on a bed after entering the closest cabin.

And at the same time—

Sigrun, who was putting on an enchanted face in front of the cabin, grew surprised and turned her head around. It was because Adenmaha was approaching her while having a paled and painful face.

“Senior?”

As Sigrun asked with a worried face, Adenmaha frowned and then sat next to Sigrun after determining herself.

“Hey.”

“Yes?”

Adenmaha gathered her lips and then said with a low voice.

“You can’t covet him, okay?”

Sigrun didn’t answer instantly. It was because she needed time to realize what Adenmaha was talking about.

But it didn’t take that long. Sigrun smiled at Adenmaha that was snorting while looked sideways and upwards at her and nodded.

“I understand.”

Adenmaha let out a sigh of relief.

—

The time of rest was short. Tae Ho hurriedly got down the ship as soon as he arrived at the residence of Idun. The warriors of Idun's legion were lined up and completely armed upon the wooden dock.

“Tae Ho.”

“Heda.”

There were many eyes looking at them, but he didn't mind. He ran towards Heda and she also didn't hold him back. They hugged each other and then shared blessings.

Adenmaha and Sigrun got down off the ship too. Heda slightly pushed Tae Ho and smiled towards Adenmaha.

“Adenmaha, you have done well.”

“It's the task of a Valkyrie.”

Adenmaha pouted slightly and snorted like always and Sigrun approached Gudrun.

Heda looked at Tae Ho and said,

“Our legion also received an order to go to war. Our warriors will be dispatched on the defense of the outskirts under the command of Gudrun and Sigrun.”

Tae Ho read several things in her short words, and that's why he asked Heda directly, “Where do I have to go?”

Tae Ho would act separately from the legion because there were really few things he could do with ten lowest-ranked warriors. The fact that Heda or Adenmaha weren't the leaders suggested that Tae Ho would act alone.

“I will tell you starting from now.”

Heda glanced at Sigrun and Gudrun and gave her a short order and then took Tae Ho and Adenmaha and entered a building near the dock. Merlin and Scathach were waiting there. Ragnar wasn't

seen as expected. He would probably be with the Gods in the front lines.

“My King.”

“Tae Ho.”

“I’m back.”

Tae Ho shared short greetings with the two people and then looked at the map that was spread over the table. Asgard and Midgard were drawn next to a line drawn in the middle.

“You may already know this, but I will still explain quickly.”

Heda got in front of the map and then placed shining rocks on top of it and said, “A bunch of Garmr’s soul fragments appeared in the front lines, and they also appeared in several places of Midgard almost at the same time.”

The number of fragments Asgard has gotten rid of numbered six in total.

It was estimated that the number of fragments were about fourteen or fifteen, so the remaining eight or nine had appeared almost at the same time.

“We are guessing that the soul fragments in Midgard woke up due to the influence of a bunch of fragments having appeared at the front lines.”

The number of shining rocks Heda placed atop the front lines was five. She didn’t exactly know how many fragments were needed to wake Fenrir, but there was a high possibility for it to awaken with naught but one or two more being gathered.

“The front lines are in a state that may explode at any time. Giants and evil spirits also appeared in Midgard, and based on Freya-nim’s words, it seemed like the God of Lies, Loki, was the one to spread them.”

Heda placed several red flags over Midgard. The situation was

more severe than when they had dealt with the fomiores.

There was the possibility that battle may be occurring even in this moment. In addition, if it was that number, it couldn't be dealt with only the warriors of Valhalla that were already in Midgard.

Tae Ho thought of Helga, King Ivar, and the knights of Kataron.

He remembered the battlefields he had shared with the humans.

It was impossible with just them. They needed the reinforcement of Asgard faster.

“Odin came up with the plan to retrieve Garmr's soul fragments after dispatching the majority of the force to Midgard.”

Heda placed blue flags in Midgard, and Tae Ho understood what they meant.

“Are we removing the Great Barrier?”

“Exactly. Deploying superior-ranked warriors after the barrier is removed is the essence of this plan.”

The Great Barrier didn't only stop the giants but also existences above the superior rank.

That's why they would remove the barrier. They would deploy a lot of strong warriors and take care of the fuss in Midgard in an instant.

“I know what you are thinking about. The giants will also be able to dispatch the forces when the Great Barrier is removed. Before Freya-nim installs the barrier again....a really big battle will occur. It won't be easy at all.”

In the Great War, Midgard had suffered almost no losses, but it would be different this time. A sea's worth of blood would flow, a notion scary just by thinking about it.

“Tae Ho, an order that you should participate in this strategy as the commander of Idun came down. Merlin and Adenmaha will

accompany you.”

Heda wouldn't go with him. Tae Ho nodded because he was already expecting it. Idun needed someone to protect her as she couldn't leave the golden apple tree. If it was Scathach and Heda, he could trust in them.

“I will entrust Idun-nim to you.”

“Right.”

Heda put a bright smile forcefully and then grabbed Tae Ho's hand.

“There's not much time. You have to go greet Idun-nim.”

“Yes, I must do it this time.”

Heda smiled at his words. Adenmaha, who was looking at the two of them, said in a low voice, “I will be preparing to depart.”

Adenmaha and Merlin got out of the building first. Tae Ho gave Gae Bolg to Scathach before going to the shrine with Heda.

“Thank you for your consideration.”

Because Scathach and Cuchulain would also need some time for themselves.

Tae Ho went to the shrine with Heda. After waiting for a bit after entering alone, he could feel Idun's divine power like usual.

“My warrior, Tae Ho.”

Idun was smiling below the golden apple tree. It was a warm and gentle smile like always, but Tae Ho could feel a bit of sadness hidden within it this time.

Tae Ho approached Idun. She stroked the cheek of Tae Ho, who'd knelt down before her, and asked, “Did you greet Father and Mother?”

It was the question he had been expecting. Tae Ho nodded slowly and looked at Idun's rune that was engraved in his wrist.

“I received runes from the previous Idun-nim.....and Bragi-nim.”

“Right.”

Idun’s eyes were still covered, but Tae Ho could feel the grief which filled them.

Idun took a breath. She smacked her lips a few times and then drew a sad smile.

“I was going to share a long story with you.....when you retrieved the legacy. I was about to tell you the several things that were related with the Great War, but we will have to leave it for later as the situation doesn’t allow it.”

It wasn’t the time to be talking about the past.

Right in this moment, a battle may be occurring in Midgard.

“My warrior, Tae Ho. My only commander.”

Idun lowered her posture. She got to the height of Tae Ho’s eyes and then embraced him.

“There’s only one thing I’m hoping from you, and I will also give you one order.”

Tae Ho could feel Idun’s heat. He could feel his chest burning at her sincere voice.

“Return alive. You must do it, no matter what happens.”

There was fear in Idun’s voice, and Tae Ho smiled towards her.

“I will obey your order.”

It wasn’t a random remark. Idun bit her lips and then nodded. She slightly pushed back Tae Ho and said, “When the Great Barrier is removed, the obstacle that disturbs our connection will also disappear. So use ‘Idun’s Warrior’ as I will always accompany you. I will support you with all my strength.”

“I will do so.”

“Right. We really don’t have anymore time. You should also have

time for Heda, right?”

Idun spoke a bit playfully and stood up. She raised Tae Ho to his feet and then gave him her best blessing.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

It was the same end as always, but Tae Ho placed his lips on her forehead by impulse. He spoke towards her, someone who hadn’t ever been able to receive a blessing, and offered one of his own.

“May my blessing accompany you.”

It was a blessing that didn’t exist nor had any sort of magical effect. Earlier, the blessing Tae Ho gave Sigrun was through utilizing the divine power of Idun.

However, Idun put on a dumbfounded expression and giggled like a girl.

“It’s the best blessing. Really the best.”

Idun smiled brightly and took a step back. She clenched her fist and then hit her chest twice.

“Go, my warrior, Tae Ho. For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Tae Ho also hit his chest twice and added.

“For Idun.”

Idun laughed once more. She sent away Tae Ho while putting aside her regret.

—

Tae Ho distributed the weapons of the seniors of Idun’s legion that he’d acquired in Vanaheim to the warriors that were lined up at the dock.

There were many excessive weapons for the lowest-ranked warriors, but he didn’t mind. Actually, he didn’t even care if he lost all of the weapons. It was more important if at least one more

warrior returned.

Sigrun and Gudrun led the warriors and left out of the residence first.

Scathach returned Gae Bolg to Tae Ho, and Adenmaha and Merlin got on the wooden boat and waited for him.

Tae Ho and Heda didn't share long words. They shared a deep and long blessing for the last time and then sent each other away.

The wooden boat went towards the central hall of Valhalla.

And at the same time, Valkyrie Hrist delivered the coffin of Vanaheim to Freya.

Freya looked at Odin and he nodded.

He said the thing that was decided once again with a resolute expression.

“We will remove the Great Barrier.”

Freya then opened the chest of Vanaheim.

< Episode 35 – Great War (3) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 4: Great War (4)

The wooden boat advanced. Tae Ho, who was looking out before the shaking boat, saw that there were green words in front of him.

There were already dozens of ships of others legions gathered in the dock. He could also see the ship of Idun's legion that had departed first.

"It feels like the dock is full."

Adenmaha blinked and said, and Tae Ho agreed to it. It was the first time that so many warriors had gathered in this place since he'd entered Valhalla.

It felt like they would number to more than a thousand even if he counted them at a glance, and Tae Ho soon realized that there were two more docks in this place.

The lowest and inferior-ranked warriors were being led by the Valkyries and moving in order. Adenmaha took out the order Heda had given her and checked where they had to go.

"Wait a moment."

Tae Ho, who was tying up the boat while Adenmaha was checking the document, turned his head at the presence he felt. His movements were so natural that the one that was planning to surprise Tae Ho was the one that rather got surprised.

"Do you have eyes on your back?"

"Bjorn."

It was Bjorn, someone whom he hadn't seen in a really long time. He hadn't been able to see him since he'd left for Midgard.

'Well, it should feel like an long while no matter who I see.'

Because he had been confined within the Tower of Shadows for two years.

But whatever the case, he was certainly a glad to see a familiar face. As Tae Ho stood up from his seat, Bjorn requested a handshake.

“You have become really strong in the time I haven’t seen you. I knew that you had potential, but I couldn’t have guessed that you would be this much stronger than before!”

Bjorn laughed and patted on Tae Ho’s shoulder, and at that moment, Tae Ho realized something. There was no need to use his ‘Eyes of the Dragon’.

Bjorn wasn’t an inferior-ranked warrior nor an intermediate-ranked one.

“You were a superior-ranked warrior all along.”

“Right. Unfortunately enough, though, I still haven’t been able to climb to the top rank.”

[Tir’s legion]

[Superior-ranked Warrior]

[Bjorn Ironside]

Several doubts were cleared but new ones were created.

Bjorn smiled first and said,

“I will introduce myself first. My name is Bjorn Ironside, the son of the great Viking King, Ragnar Lodbrok.”

“What?”

He asked in disbelief. Bjorn laughed once again and shrugged his shoulders.

“Heh. I understand. I am indeed a bit famous.”

“No, I don’t actually know about you....but you are the son of Master Ragnar?”

Bjorn flinched as Tae Ho spoke as if he really didn’t know about him but then shook his head and hit his chest.

“Right. I am the son of that Ragnar Lodbrok and the one that was called the Adventure King, Viking Bjorn Ironside.”

Adventure King. He certainly didn't know, and because of that, Tae Ho decided to focus on another thing.

“Now that you speak like this, you are indeed a bit similar. Your eyes, for instance.”

“Our character should be a bit different. People say that I resemble my mother.”

Bjorn shook his head as if he had given up getting a reaction from Tae Ho and then started to explain the necessary things as always.

“But whatever the case, you seem like you are curious. What if I were to tell you that I'm in the same situation as Father? I received a really big injury in the Great War. That's why, rather than battling on the front lines, I roamed several legions to discover some rising stars and support them. It seems like I'm bragging, but....what do you think would have happened if you weren't able to meet me that first day?”

“Ah.....”

Tae Ho nodded unconsciously. It was just like Bjorn had said.

Tae Ho had gotten dragged to the battlefield while he didn't know anything about Valhalla. If Bjorn hadn't been there, he wouldn't have been able to think about creating a saga and then, rather than surviving, he would have become a Steel Warrior faster than anyone.

But thinking about it, that wasn't the only case. In the early stages after he'd entered Valhalla, Bjorn had appeared in several places and given him advice and help.

“Well, but it's not that I have been following you. There was no need to do so at all.”

Because Tae Ho performed much better than he thought. In

addition, he also had Heda. As she came to find him every day and gave him all sorts of help, Bjorn had nothing to do besides watch.

“Actually, I was a bit worried. I didn’t know that you would go to Idun’s legion.”

Before Tae Ho entered it, Idun’s legion had no new warriors for a hundred years. Actually, it was obvious that he grew worried as he was entering a legion only in name.

Tae Ho also thought like that at first, but now he could speak more confidently than anyone.

“I’m glad I entered Idun’s legion.”

Because he was able to meet Heda. Because he was able to serve Idun as his Goddess.

Bjorn nodded.

“Right. It looked like that. You should be grateful that you entered Idun’s legion. If you had gone to another legion.....I wonder, I don’t know if talking about this would have any meaning, but I think that you won’t have been able to reach your current level.”

“I agree.”

Because it really was like that.

If he didn’t have Heda’s and Idun’s dedicated help, the current Tae Ho wouldn’t have been able to exist. No, in the first place, if he didn’t have Idun’s blessing, he would have become a Steel Warrior on his first expedition.

Idun’s warrior.

That was Tae Ho himself. He couldn’t imagine any other name aside of that.

Bjorn nodded in consecution as if he liked Tae Ho’s prideful face and then looked at Adenmaha that was flipping the documents and said,

“Anyways, I will give you a bit of help. I know well where you have to go.”

Adenmaha raised her head. Her eyes were filled with fear at that. She didn't want to become a useless Valkyrie for Tae Ho, but a sense of relief soon followed.

“It's obvious to get lost if you are a new Valkyrie as the dock today is really complicated. The Valkyries of other legions were also quite lost.”

Bjorn smiled and spoke like a good person and winked towards Adenmaha. She snorted like always but then slightly bowed and expressed her thanks to him.

Bjorn said once again,

“Siri and Bracky were led by Ingrid to Midgard. You were chosen as one of the superior-ranked warriors that will get deployed to Midgard as soon as the Great Barrier gets removed.”

The latter contents were ones he already knew, but the other things were a bit unexpected.

Tae Ho felt anxious and asked,

“Are you also going?”

“I am going to Midgard but to a different place from you. There are a lot of scandalous places, you know.”

It was when Bjorn had finished speaking that the sound of a horn trumpet was heard from far away, but this blare was different from the ones that were heard until now.

“Ugh. We should hurry. It seems like they will be departing soon. Follow me, quick.”

Bjorn walked forward and opened a path. Adenmaha hurriedly stood up and followed Tae Ho with Merlin.

“We aren't going to use the Bifrost?”

Tae Ho asked while looking at the path that connected to the fortress of Heimdal, and Bjorn shook his head.

“There are too many people for that.”

Half of the warriors that were gathered on the dock would be going to the outskirts or the front lines just like the lowest-ranked warriors of Idun’s legion were, but the remaining half would go to Midgard.

Bjorn passed the warriors and moved to a place that had few people and then black and familiar things appeared in front of them.

“Master, is that.....”

Adenmaha asked with an uneasy face. She had never rode on it or seen it move, but she remembered seeing it standing still on the battlefield and so could guess what it was used for.

Rain of Steel.

And the fastest model at that.

Tae Ho took a deep breath. Thinking about it, it was an obvious thing as most of the warriors rode on the Rains of Steel when they attacked the base of the fomoires.

“Let’s cheer up, fighting!”

Tae Ho cheered Adenmaha and walked towards the steel structures.

—

Freya recited a chant with a nervous face.

The place that was the conference room for the Gods was now adorned with a huge magical circle.

The Gods that didn’t have a legion stood on certain places of the magic circle. It was to act as living rechargers to supply enough strength in the recreation of the Great Barrier.

Freya stood in the center of the magic circle and then checked that the powerful magical tools she took out from the coffin of Vanaheim were in their right places. Every second was precious right now, but that's why she had to inspect it more carefully.

‘Good, there's no problem. You can do it. Oppa would also compliment you.’

Freya mumbled inwardly and then raised her head and looked at Odin upon a high platform.

‘I'm ready.’

Freya said with her eyes. The time needed to remove the Great Barrier and install a new one wasn't short.

Even if it was set up in the most ideal timeframe, it would certainly take a few hours.

In that time, the warriors had to protect Midgard. They had to successfully retrieve the soul fragments and crush the ambitions of the giants.

“Let's start.”

Odin spoke in a low voice. The Gods lowered their posture and started to insert magic power in the magic circle.

The removal of the Great Barrier.

The installation of a new one.

Odin stabbed the air with Gungnir, and the breakdown of the Great Barrier followed.

—

The God of Fire and Lies, Loki, who was in Midgard, could see it clearly.

The Great Barrier had started to break. The barrier that had been protecting Midgard for the past hundred years was being removed.

At the same time, existences that had mighty power were

approaching from different places.

The superior-ranked warriors of Valhalla.

And the giants of Jotunheim.

The things that both sides were aiming for were the same. The soul fragments of Garmr that had appeared in several places of Midgard.

Loki looked away. He looked under the ground and spoke.

—

The Giant of the Night, Avalt, sensed that the Great Barrier had started to disappear. The time his king was talking about had come.

The Giant of Beasts, Ortr, roared and the Giant of the Sea lead his army and marched.

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, stood up from his throne and looked towards Midgard and Asgard.

—

The battle started in the front lines, and at the same time, the steel structures that were fired from Valhalla poured down on Midgard.

“It’s much better, right?”

Adenmaha just gritted her teeth at Tae Ho’s question. Merlin was taking deep breaths next to then with a strange rhythm.

The warriors that were riding the Rain of Steel for the first time screamed out in fear and joy, and the warriors that had used them several times cheered as if they were riding amidst a glorious parade.

Tae Ho grabbed Adenmaha’s hand and took a deep breath. As soon as they landed, battle would break out.

The destination of the steel structure Tae Ho rode on had

Kataron as its objective.

Tae Ho thought of Helga and King Ivar who he hadn't seen for a long time, and Merlin was also putting a different expression than usual as he also had deep connections with Kataron.

‘Rather than that, isn't it because of the Rain of Steel?’

Tae Ho ignored Cuchulainn's words and thought of Siri and Bracky. He didn't know where they were headed to, but it would be fine if it were them. Tae Ho was rather worried about Ingrid.

“We will arrive soon! Shut your mouths and get ready!”

A voice of the Valkyrie was heard from the other side. He didn't know which legion she belonged to, but she was full of charisma.

‘If we mix Reginleif and Gandur, will it be similar to her?’

Time still flowed while Tae Ho thought of strange things, and finally, the Rain of Steel crashed onto the ground. Shock and adrenaline swept through the group as the heavy door swung open with the groan of the warriors.

At that moment, screams and cries were heard.

Roar and cheers covered the sky and the ground.

It was truly the middle of a battlefield. The giants and the evil spirits were destroying the castle and the city. The warriors of Kataron were fighting desperately and buying time for the citizens to escape.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms!”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms!”

The warriors of Valhalla roared and charged. The number of warriors that poured out of the steel structures were more than a hundred. Most of them were lowest or inferior-ranked warriors, but they were still much stronger than the warriors of Kataron.

Tae Ho acted calmly. The only superior-ranked warrior deployed

at the region of Kataron was himself. The Valkyrie was the one who commanded the troops but even so, he couldn't act by his own.

Tae Ho was the tactical weapon in this battle. He had to intervene effectively in the place that needed him the most.

“Rolo! McLaren!”

Tae Ho used the summoning rocks for the first time in a long while. McLaren, who erupted from deep beneath the ground, charged towards the castle. He became a barrier against the giants and evil spirits to replace the already broken defences.

Rolo flew up instead of carrying Tae Ho, and he activated a saga for him.

[Saga: Owner of Flames]

The red dragon, Shooting Star, who'd first contracted with the Dragon Knight, Kalsted.

Rolo transformed into a strong dragon and flew directly into the void from which the evil spirits poured from and burned them with a rain of fire.

“Adenmaha.”

“Call me whenever you need me.”

Adenmaha transformed into a sea serpent and charged alone into the battlefield just like Rolo had done. She spat icy breath and became another obstacle between the fleeing citizens and the evil spirits.

Tae Ho clambered down the steel structures with Merlin. He used rune magic which he'd learned from Cuchulainn and looked down at the battlefield from his vantage point.

Kataron was already half burnt. The number of the knights of Kataron he counted with his 'Eyes of the Dragon' weren't even a sixth of the original number.

The number of the giants and evil spirits were about a thousand. Most of them were evil spirits, but there were three giants among them. It was obvious that they couldn't be stopped with the strength of mere humans.

Tae Ho pulled out Caladbolg and was about to fire lightning towards the harpies covering the skies.

But at that moment, something entered Tae Ho's eyes.

[The Dying]

[Princess of Kataron]

[Helga]

Tae Ho gritted his teeth. He activated the 'Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him' to summon the fake Heda and seven more and ordered them to face the harpies. He left the fake Valkyries behind and charged towards Helga.

There were many evil spirits in his path. The race that had dog and pig heads charged towards Tae Ho fearlessly.

Tae Ho pressed himself down as anger boiled in his soul. His fast, precise sword techniques were executed in brutal fashion instead of firing the lightning from Caladbolg.

Caladbolg split the air.

The stroke of his sword became a vicious gale that swept up the battlefield before him.

The wind shattered.

The evil spirits which charged towards Tae Ho fell in an instant. Their lower and upper bodies were separated and rolled separately along the ground.

Tae Ho charged between them and the horrified evil spirits scattered at the overwhelming difference in power.

"Helga!"

Helga, who was leaning on a half-broken wall, fell down. There was a coarse sword that the evil spirits used stuck in her chest. Her entire body was covered with wounds, and blood flowed freely down her red-stained clothes.

“Idun’s.....wa...rior-nim.”

Helga smiled and said. It seemed like her voice would fade at any moment, and her eyes were without focus.

“Helga....fought....hard.....she’s....not.....emb....arr..”

She couldn’t speak properly. Tae Ho laid down Helga and spoke urgently.

“You did well. You did well Helga, so relax as I have come. The warriors of Valhalla have come.”

“I’m gla.....”

Helga’s smile lost strength even more. Tae Ho hurriedly used a recovery rune, but it had no effect.

Because the recovery rune merely amplified one’s recovery power. If one used it on a warrior of Valhalla that had transcendent health and recovery rate, they would be able to heal them even from the brink of death, but Helga was but a common human.

Tae Ho instantly took out a piece of a golden apple but Merlin, who’d arrived a bit late, held him back. It was because it was already too late.

Helga’s body started to cool down. It was still warm, but it was only for a moment.

The Princess of Kataron, Helga.

She had become a faithful follower of Idun after having been rescued by Tae Ho.

She stood on the front lines even though she was a mortal princess and lost her life for the citizens. She put a strengthless

smile and faced her end.

Tae Ho gritted his teeth. He breathed out roughly and closed Helga's eyes.

Merlin put on a dumbfounded face beside him. It wasn't because he'd gotten shocked at her death.

“My King....”

Merlin pulled on Tae Ho's arm. Tae Ho, who was about to mourn Helga, looked back at Merlin with an angry face, but Merlin didn't mind that and pointed to the sky.

Tae Ho also looked up and put the same face as Merlin.

He saw a half materialized Valkyrie up there and saw Helga next to her.

‘I will wait for you in the residence!’

She looked down at Tae Ho and her own corpse and spoke brightly. The Valkyrie that was next to her smiled awkwardly upon seeing the astonished faces of Tae Ho and Merlin and then waved her hand before returning to Valhalla with Helga.

‘You get dumb at times like this.’

Cuchulainn said in a low voice.

Tae Ho also felt the same.

“It....it turned out well.”

Merlin's words stumbled out. Thinking about it, he was right. Because it wasn't easy to enter Valhalla.

But still, she had died. Tae Ho looked down at the corpse of Helga with a complicated feeling. He was hoping that she could live a happy life and then come to Valhalla.

He laid down Helga's corpse, who bore a deeply content expression, and then stood up.

It wasn't guaranteed that all warriors would enter Valhalla like

Helga, and it wasn't said that it would give happy results for them.

He had to rescue at least one more warrior. He had to save the powerless citizens of Kataron.

'It's coming.'

Cuchulainn said.

A giant with a strong aura was approaching them from the distance.

< Episode 35 – Great War (4) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 5: Great War (5)

The King of Gods, Odin, had an extreme method.

Deploy the warriors of Valhalla to Midgard after removing the Great Barrier.

It wasn't something that couldn't be understood rationally.

It was because it was a situation that the soul fragments had to be retrieved at once, and one couldn't know how much the barrier was damaged.

Rains of Steel poured down from the sky, and giants and evil spirits surged up from below the ground.

Tae Ho left Helga's corpse and glared at the sky. The things that were now pouring down from the sky weren't only the steel structures. Red words were approaching from a further place.

They were the giants of Jotunheim. Just like Valhalla could deploy warriors with the Rains of Steel, the giants could also do the same with their burning pillars.

But they couldn't do it faster than Valhalla. It was only for now, but there was only one pillar of fire descending on Kataron.

He would solve it quickly.

And not delay any longer.

A picture was drawn in Tae Ho's head and then he kicked forward. The fake Valkyries gathered next to Tae Ho upon heeding his mental command. Precisely speaking, they stood in front of Tae Ho to charge towards the evil spirits and open up a path.

Tae Ho saw while running.

Adenmaha and McLaren were each facing a giant.

A mere lowest-ranked giant couldn't endure Adenmaha who had transformed into a sea serpent and was manifesting several

mystical powers.

Adenmaha froze the eyes of the giant by firing an icy breath and then swung her tail to hit his leg. She then stomped on the giant, who fell down, and activated several mystical powers. The giant had his head and vital organs pierced by icy spears and couldn't even scream.

McLaren suppressed the giant in a much simpler fashion. He merely climbed up the giant like a vine around a tree and then took him down.

The reason the knights of Kataron were being pushed back was because of the giants which they could do nothing about with the strength of humans. As the warriors of Valhalla were already eliminating quite a number of evil spirits, they would be able to protect Kataron with just the knights after removing the giants.

Tae Ho kept running and looked at a distant place. He saw Rolo that was facing the last giant.

Rolo, who'd transformed into the Master of Flames, Shooting Star, understood the fighting methods instinctively as a born dragon should. He flew sharply like a predator to catch its food to kick him in the chest and made him fall. He then poured out violent attacks on his head. The flaming breath burnt down the head of the giant.

“Rolo!”

Rolo turned his head at the call of Tae Ho. He checked that he was running to himself and then checked the giant once again. He chewed down his neck roughly as if ensuring the giant's death and then flew backwards towards Tae Ho.

[Saga: The Charge of a Warrior is like a Storm]

Tae Ho kicked the air and surged up. He didn't send a particular signal, but Rolo understood Tae Ho's intention with just that. He flew below Tae Ho so that he could ride on him easily.

Tae Ho landed on Rolo's back, and at that moment, Rolo fluttered his wings once more. He raised his head while being on top of Rolo that was flying up high. He estimated the time left for the fire pillar to land on the ground and the location.

[Strengthened Saga]

[The Eyes of the Dragon see through Everything]

He estimated the strength of the giant inside the pillar and at the same time read the trajectory the fire pillar was drawing.

[Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

Tae Ho transmitted his thoughts to Rolo. Rolo cursed at the excessive request, but his eyes were smiling.

The giant inside the fire pillar was an intermediate one. He was weaker than Tae Ho but wasn't an enemy that could be defeated easily when fought face to face.

That's why he would save time and take care of him with a single attack!

Rolo fluttered his wings and flew to a different place instead of the fire pillar. He drew a big trajectory in the air and increased his speed.

It wasn't a lance charging. It was something else. Tae Ho put back Caladbolg and took a deep breath. He poured all his concentration on controlling Rolo's flight speed and trajectory.

The fire pillar pierced the clouds and started to head to the ground while burning the land. It finally let out a big sound and got stuck in the ground.

And right at that moment—

Rolo flew low, horizontally. He charged towards the fire pillar.

[Saga: His Pocket is Connected with a Treasure Vault]

Tae Ho gripped the air, and at that moment, a huge hilt of a

sword was grabbed. Rolo continued to charge forward and Tae Ho pulled out a huge sword from the air as if unsheathing it.

[Nodachi for Giants]

[Fragarach's Prototype]

Merlin hadn't remained idle during the time Tae Ho was in the Tower of Shadows. He made a new sword meant to deal with giants as he battled them frequently.

The fire pillar broke down and the giant appeared while howling. Rolo flew behind that giant just like an arrow trying to pierce its target.

[Saga: Giant Killer]

[Saga: The Hammer of the Blacksmith doesn't Slip Off]

Light appeared on top of the huge sword that was half pulled from the air. Tae Ho activated the sentence of the Milesians and completely pulled it out while roaring. It was a really huge sword where only the hilt was 1 meter long and the blade was 7 meters long.

The fire pillar broke down completely and the giant tried to roar as if to announce its presence, but the huge sword reached the neck of that giant a second later. It slashed his neck even before he could open his mouth!

Chkwaaaak!

Blood spurted out, but it didn't reach Tae Ho. It was because of the speed Rolo flew at as they were charging. He fluttered his wings to increase their height, and Tae Ho looked at the ground while holding the huge sword. The head of the giant got separated from its body and was rolling on the ground.

The warriors of Valhalla couldn't understand instantly what had happened. Because everything ended while they blinked a few times after the fire pillar descended.

Because of that, they needed some time. A few more seconds of silence had to be added to it. Rolo turned in the air completely and only then did the cheer explode in the ground.

“Idun’s warrior!”

“Dragon knight!”

Tae Ho didn’t ignore those cheers. He put back his huge sword and then scattered the magic powder he took out. And then, the shape of a golden apple tree appeared behind him.

“Idun!”

“Idun!”

“Goddess of Youth!”

The warriors went wild once again. Adenmaha laughed, and Cuchulainn feigned a laugh as if it was absurd.

‘Bragi’s rune is meaningless here.’

In the first place, it didn’t have much place to intervene in Tae Ho’s promotion.

Tae Ho looked at a distant place. The half materialized Valkyries were leading the souls of the warriors to Valhalla. It seemed like they were lacking in numbers as several battles occurred at the same place that they were carrying several warriors, and most of them were apprentice Valkyries.

Tae Ho relaxed when he found Helga among them. He then checked the land and inspected the situation.

There were still many evil spirits remaining in Kataron, but the situation had changed completely. The evil spirits that witnessed the giants’ defeat in front of them fled in consecution rather than continuing to battle.

Because of that, Tae Ho looked away from Kataron and peered into a farther place.

In the first place, the reason superior-ranked warriors descended everywhere in a scattered way wasn't only to face the giants and evil spirits. No matter what the warriors thought, the most important thing Valhalla had determined was retrieving the soul fragments.

They guessed that there would be four soul fragments in Midgard.

A catastrophe could occur if even one of them fell in the hands of the giants.

Tae Ho first looked at the winter tree forest. There was a low probability that it would be there as a soul fragment had already appeared there in the past, but he didn't come to a hasty conclusion. It was because there was no way a superior-ranked warrior would have been dispatched to a place that had no probabilities to have Garmr's soul fragment in it.

[Strengthened Saga]

[The Eyes of the Dragon See through Everything]

He flew towards the winter tree forest and concentrated. There were shining words deep in the forest that still couldn't recover completely from the wound of the past. It was certainly a soul fragment of Garmr.

Tae Ho transmitted his thought to Rolo once again and he started to fly towards the forest.

But it was at that moment that the voice of Adenmaha rang in his head.

‘Master! It's approaching!’

It was a magical message. Tae Ho raised his head in response. He still couldn't feel it well, but as soon as he activated the mystical power that strengthened his eyesight, he could see what Adenmaha was speaking about.

They were fire pillars, several of them this time. In addition, one of them was so big it couldn't be compared to the others.

Tae Ho released his mystical power and judged quickly.

It was impossible with just Tae Ho alone. Now that Garmr's soul fragment was here, it was highly probable that the giants would keep attacking.

“Adenmaha!”

Tae Ho yelled. It would have been normal not to have heard it properly because of the long distance, but Adenmaha understood it in an instant. She transformed into a Goddess once again and transmitted her thought to Merlin with her mystical power.

Merlin recited a chant. It was magic that transmitted news to Valhalla.

A soul fragment of Garmr has been discovered, so dispatch superior-ranked warriors or above that are in reserve.

Tae Ho continued acting. It was to prepare to retrieve Garmr's soul fragment as he still had time before the fire pillars descended completely.

[Saga: Idun's Warrior]

[Saga: King of Camelot]

Tae Ho activated his sagas in consecution. It was to prepare to fight against the giants as a great battle would unleash as soon as the fire pillars descended.

‘My warrior, Tae Ho.’

Idun's voice was heard. He could hear her voice clearly just like when he activated his saga in other places, probably because the Great Barrier had been removed.

‘He's a superior-ranked giant or above. Perhaps, he may be an existence similar to the Giant of Earth you faced before.’

Cuchulainn spoke quickly. They could now see the fire pillars clearly even without activating their mystical powers.

‘They said that they’ll depart immediately!’

Adenmaha’s voice was heard in his head clearly. It seemed like a reply had come from Valhalla.

Rolo also reached the winter tree forest as the fire pillars were descending there instead of Kataron.

Tae Ho could feel Idun’s anxiousness. He felt like he could see her putting on a worried expression and clenching her chest.

Tae Ho kicked Rolo’s back and they headed to the ground while kicking off the air. He looked at the soul fragment of Garmr that was emanating a dreary aura in the middle of the trees. It was a big claw of a beast that was stuck in the ground.

Rolo cried and urged Tae Ho. it was because the fire pillars had gotten closer.

Tae Ho hurriedly used the divine power of Idun to try to retrieve the soul fragment.

But it was at that moment.

‘Tae Ho!’

Idun yelled hurriedly. Tae Ho could guess what Idun had seen and had gotten surprised at because they were connected with ‘Idun’s Warrior’. There was someone standing among the trees and looking at him.

He was someone that Tae Ho had met for the first time.

But he could know the moment he saw him.

Idun let out an enraged roar.

‘Loki!’

The God of Fire and Lies, Loki.

He was standing there in the open, and that fact made Idun both

enraged and fearful at the same time.

The fire pillars were already descending, but Loki appeared in front of them.

Idun yelled at Tae Ho to escape and tried to buy some time even if she ended up expending a lot of her divine power at once.

But Tae Ho didn't move. He stopped Idun that was about to release her divine power and looked at Loki.

[The God of Fire and Lies]

[Loki]

He could only see his name and nothing besides that. The current Tae Ho could only read his name clearly.

But that wasn't all. That's why he stopped Idun.

His words weren't red.

The words that appeared on top of the head of Loki were green!

How?

He couldn't find an answer. He lacked time to do so.

Loki looked at Tae Ho and saw through Tae Ho's 'Eyes of the Dragon' like Heda had done previously. Because of that, he placed his right index finger to his lips instead of saying anything.

He looked at Tae Ho, requesting him to stay silent.

'Stay silent, as it's not the time right now.'

Idun couldn't understand. She thought that Loki was lying Tae Ho with his specialty of trickery and fabrication.

'Master!'

Adenmaha yelled and Tae Ho raised his head. Rolo was crying out as if telling him to hop on with haste. He could see the fire pillars that seemed like they would cover the ground at any moment.

Tae Ho looked at Loki and Loki faced him and hit his chest twice

with a fist.

For Asgard and the Nine Realms.

‘Tae Ho!’

Tae Ho made a decision. He released Idun’s divine power to seal Garmr’s soul fragment. He then charged in the air and surged up.

[One of the Five Fingers]

[Giant of Beasts]

[Ortr]

The fire pillars descended on the forest.

< Episode 35 – Great War (5) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 6: Great War (6)

Idun remembered the Great War.

She kept looking at it through the piece of memory she couldn't erase.

The death of the previous Idun and Bragi.

The last, desperate battle of Idun's legion that didn't even leave a single lowest-ranked warrior alive and ended with its heroic death.

If the great Viking King, Ragnar Lodbrok, hadn't been able to arrive on time, a new Idun wouldn't exist right now. Idun's legion also couldn't continue existing.

Because of that, Idun couldn't trust in Loki. Because he was the one that had betrayed the Gods of Asgard when the war was coming to an end. He was a monster that betrayed his brother, Thor, and stabbed behind the King of Gods, Odin.

Loki had several offspring, but the most famous among them were the three that were born between Angrboda.

The World Wolf, Fenrir, that would lead to the end of the world.

The huge Space Snake, Jormungand, who dwarfed even the most massive giants.

Hela, who lived all the moments from when she was born to when she died at the same time.

Each one of them were a world-ending calamity.

Although Hela was sided with Asgard, it was different for the other two. They had become enemies of Asgard long before the Great War started.

That's why she couldn't trust in Loki even more.

He and his blood relatives were enemies of Asgard, and that was something reasonable to enforce in one's mind.

Because Loki was a giant.

Even though the King of Gods, Odin, had given him the rank of a God, it wasn't that his origin and essence changed all that much.

'Tae Ho. My warrior, Tae Ho.'

Idun didn't say that out loud. She bit her lips while clenching her burning chest.

Tae Ho had been deceived by Loki. The treacherous God of Lies had tricked Tae Ho.

But it was a situation that she couldn't yell or tell him to think it twice.

Idun saw it through Tae Ho. The fire pillars were descending on the winter tree forest and there was still the one that contained the strongest foe.

Right now he should only think about fighting and remaining alive.

"My warrior, Tae Ho."

Idun called out Tae Ho's name and transmitted him the golden divine power without saving it.

—

Tae Ho didn't turn to look back. The moment he kicked the air to get on Rolo's back, two fire pillars hit the ground, and fire surged up with a loud roar. Intermediate-ranked giants appeared from within the black smoke that followed.

The winter tree forest quickly burned down as Adenmaha and Merlin were approaching from far away while riding on McLaren.

Tae Ho raised his head. He erased his thoughts about Loki and looked at the front.

[Giant of Beasts]

[Ortr]

‘We will buy time until reinforcements come. Just think about that.’

Cuchulainn said quickly. Actually, the right answer in this situation was to escape. Even if Tae Ho had gotten stronger, it was impossible to face the Giant of Beasts, a foe comparable to the Giant of Earth, and also a big group of intermediate-ranked giants at the same time!

But if Tae Ho fell back here, only destruction was fated for Kataron.

In addition, the giants would be able to acquire the soul fragment without any obstructions.

Cuchulainn didn’t tell him to escape. It was because he knew Tae Ho too well.

Tae Ho wouldn’t retreat, and even if Cuchulainn told him to do so, he would stay back and fight.

That’s why Cuchulainn didn’t regret choosing Tae Ho as Erin’s successor.

‘Let’s go!’

Cuchulainn yelled out, and Tae Ho transmitted his thought to Rolo.

Rolo flew up towards the burning pillar that was descending with an overwhelming speed. It was to aim for the moment the fire pillar descended and attack it just like he had done so for the intermediate giant.

Two trajectories were drawn in the sky.

Both paths contained funnels of roaring flames.

Rolo took a big turn and Tae Ho kept analyzing the trajectory of the fire pillar, and after a moment, he hurriedly gave an order to Rolo.

“Dodge!”

The trajectory of the fire pillar twisted. It exploded in the air even though it hadn't reached the ground yet, and someone appeared from the remnants of the fire pillar and charged towards Rolo.

It was a giant that had the head of a lion and the wings of an eagle. The giant that had nails of a dragon split the air and fell.

Rolo tried to dodge him, but it wasn't easy to twist his body in the middle of a flight. In addition, the giant was extremely fast.

Ortr's fist hit the air, but the effects were enough. Rolo's body shook even though the attack had missed him, and the gale created by his fist messed up Rolo's flight.

Rolo crashed on the ground. Ortr also couldn't do anything about the descending speed and fell to the earth as well.

Tae Ho hurriedly kicked the air. He had jumped from Rolo's back the moment Ortr's fist missed him and then threw himself towards Ortr that had landed in a messed up way due to having changed directions in the air.

[Saga: His Pocket is Connected to a Treasure Vault]

Tae Ho took out Fragarach's prototype once more from the air. He tried to strike Ortr's head along the descending speed.

But Ortr reacted with ease. He, who had risen up before Tae Ho's attack hit him, was much faster than the Giant of Earth. He hurriedly raised his arms to block Tae Ho's attack.

Kakang!

The prototype of Fragarach collided with the steel protectors Ortr bore upon his forearms, and a loud explosion resonated from the impact.

Ortr groaned for a moment and then swung his arm roughly. Tae Ho dropped Fragarach's prototype without regrets and entrusted his body to the force behind his attack. He was tossed into the air

and then transformed into a hawk to regain his bearings.

“Idun’s warrior!”

Ortr yelled. He spread his massive wings of an eagle and surged up.

The strength behind each stroke of his wings was so strong that all the trees in the forest shook. It was certain that Tae Ho wouldn’t be able to beat him in speed, so he transformed back into a human and vaulted through the air to enter his reach.

“Quickly! Quicker!”

Adenmaha urged while riding on McLaren. The winter tree forest was burning up entirely. She could see about five huge giants from within, and the biggest and strongest one was battling Tae Ho in the air.

Adenmaha felt like her heart would explode. She panted without being able to calm her rough breath and yelled,

“Is the reinforcement far away?!”

“Valhalla replied. Reinforcements will come soon!”

Merlin, who was beside Adenmaha, answered her frantic question. He was also as anxious as Adenmaha but the number of battlefields he had been through was different to hers. He looked at the battlefield with calm eyes on top of McLaren that was charging with all his speed.

Perhaps, it was a more desperate situation than with the Giant of Earth.

Because back then, the Giant of Earth was alone, and he had Bracky and Siri by his side.

However, Merlin didn’t get discouraged. The training received in the Tower of Shadows had made Tae Ho strong. One could dismiss it as a mere two years, but those two years were everything but ordinary

The strongest warrior of Erin, Cuchulainn, had guided Tae Ho.

The martial arts of Scathach, which had created lots of heroes, were carved into Tae Ho's being.

He'd also experienced desperate battles. His opponents weren't ordinary but were the heroes of Erin that had learned Scathach's style of techniques.

That's why it was fine. He would be able to endure it.

Even if it was an emergency situation and they lacked hands, Valhalla wouldn't be picky on reinforcements now that one of the Five Fingers had appeared.

"I will entrust you with the protection!"

Adenmaha yelled as soon as they approached the winter tree forest. She stood up from his seat and then jumped away from McLaren's head. She flew for a moment with the mystical power of the Tuatha De Danann and then transformed into a sea serpent.

Sea serpents were a draconic race that had the sea as their headquarters. As a result, battling on a dry stretch of land didn't suit them, much less a burning one.

But Adenmaha didn't hesitate even a little bit. As soon as she transformed into a sea serpent, she fired icy breath to the closest intermediate-ranked giant and then used strong mystical powers in consecution as if she wouldn't save energy.

Ice swords and spears poured towards the giant. McLaren yelled something in the excitement, and Merlin jumped up from McLaren and recited a chant. He was planning to use the fire as it spread all over the ground.

"Fire snake!"

The flames started to wave following the trajectory Merlin's staff drew. It started to gather and form a whirlpool before becoming a huge snake of fire that attacked the giants.

McLaren didn't stay still either. He slammed into the giants that were trying to attack Adenmaha with all his strength and then tore at the necks of the giants who had lost their balance and fallen.

A battle between giants and monsters occurred on the ground, and Tae Ho and Ortr battled in the air.

Tae Ho knew how he had to fight against a giant. The difference in bodies meant that the distance he could execute an attack was also different.

Tae Ho closed the distance with Ortr. Precisely speaking, he only tried to fight above him and in addition, he didn't stop his movements.

Still, it wasn't an easy thing to do because Ortr was well aware that such a battle was disadvantageous to him. Additionally, they weren't on the ground, but in the air right now.

Ortr moved his body rashly without resting to prevent Tae Ho from approaching him, and when even a little bit of distance was created, he poured out attacks at twisted angles. He was a giant that was closer to being a beast rather than a warrior.

Ortr's nails split the air once more. Tae Ho twisted his body in the air to dodge the attack and then clung to his wrist and activated a saga.

[Saga: Warrior's Equipment]

[Saga: Warrior's Equipment]

The several weapons Kalsted used poured towards Ortr. As there was the difference in size and the strength behind it was weak as he had thrown it quickly, one couldn't completely ignore it. It was because each weapon displayed their unique effects.

The Executioner's sword created a bleeding effect. He created a small wound, and the Vein Blade that passed over it emanated a nasty poison and affected Ortr.

The sword of lightning, Lightning Edge, flew towards Ortr's eye. It struck out with a powerful jolt of electricity that took out Ortr's vision for a moment.

Tae Ho reached his shoulder in an instant and then Ortr hit his own shoulder with his palm. Tae Ho barely threw his body back to dodge the attack and then grabbed Arondight, the sword of Lancelot, and activated a saga one more time.

[Saga: The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

The fake Valkyries spread and divided Ortr's eyes and consciousness. There were ten Valkyries, as he'd called everyone excluding Freya.

Tae Ho stabbed behind Ortr's neck and he let out a roar instead of screaming in pain. The blade of sound, that could be perceived as being a sort of magic, hacked at the fake Valkyries, and a lot of them poured down, especially on Tae Ho.

They were soundwave swords that weren't visible to the naked eye, but Tae Ho could see their trajectories. He read all of them with his 'Eyes of the Dragon' and swung Arondight. He executed a Wind split once and pushed away all the blades of sound.

But it was impossible to stay in his place. It was because Ortr had released a strong aura throughout his body.

Tae Ho hurriedly kicked his neck and threw himself in the air. At that moment, Ortr quickly turned his body and opened his mouth towards Tae Ho. Flames that wouldn't fall behind to the breath of a dragon were spontaneously fired from his mouth.

Tae Ho gritted his teeth and swung his sword once more and then split the flames with the sword of wind. At that moment, the flames of a real dragon covered Ortr.

It was the flame spat by Rolo from below.

Ortr hurriedly covered himself with his wings of an eagle. He roared in fury and subsequently fired blades of sound once again.

“Idun’s warrior! Idun’s warrior!”

Tae Ho didn’t charge towards the blades of sound. He covered himself with a large round shield made from his ‘Warrior’s Equipment’ and entrusted his body to gravity. Rolo surged up and caught Tae Ho on his back.

Rolo first distanced himself from Ortr and Tae Ho breathed roughly and panted.

Idun’s divine power covered Tae Ho.

It certainly wasn’t easy. Just looking at the battle from outside, it seemed like Tae Ho was pouring attacks one sidedly, but he couldn’t inflict a fatal wound on him. In addition, just battling the Giant of Beasts consumed a lot of his strength and concentration.

Rolo took a big turn. Ortr spread his wings once again and then prepared to fly.

Tae Ho looked down at Ortr and extended his hand to the air. He called out the name of the weapon that would replace Arondight.

“The Gunlance of the Royal Dragon!”

It was one of the huge spears the Dragon Knight, Kalsted, used in Dark Age.

In the first place, it was a weapon meant to be used while riding a dragon, so this spear was much bigger than the ones Tae Ho had used until now.

The Gunlance of the Royal Dragon, that could only be forged after one defeated a black dragon covered with lava, was black and red. The red and yellow lines on its black surface emanated a light akin to lava flowing down a volcano, and it had the head of a dragon as a decoration suitable of the name Gunlance.

The blades made with fangs of a black dragon proclaimed its strong presence with a stout aura. It was currently the strongest weapon Tae Ho could recreate from Dark Age.

“Let’s go, Rolo.”

Tae Ho spoke curtly. Rolo fluttered his wings once and charged towards Ortr by his command. Ortr also flew towards Tae Ho as if his victory was all but uncertain.

And it was at that moment that Merlin, who was facing the intermediate-ranked giants on the ground, looked at the sky. He saw the objects that were pouring down beyond Ortr and Tae Ho.

They were the Black Flashes. There wasn’t only one structure that held superior-ranked warriors, but three.

Loki also saw that. He, who was standing in the burning forest, rolled his fingers in a casual manner.

The Giant of Beasts, Ortr, was fighting in front of him.

And the Giant of the Night, Avalt, and the Giant of the Sea, Grund, were both also in Midgard.

There weren’t only the Five Fingers. The superior giants that were in Jotunheim were leading their underlings and descending on Midgard.

The King of the frost giants, Warrior King Harmarti, was battling in the front lines. There were small battles everywhere, and the most elite of the forces under the command of Thor and Ullr were preparing to face them.

It really was a dogfight. The ones that had their names spread far away were all fighting their own battles.

Because of that, Loki felt that it was time.

“Let everything go as the King wishes.”

Loki said in a low voice. He looked at Tae Ho and Ortr that were clashing in the sky. The ground and the sky shook at the same time.

—

Freya, who was pouring all her strength into the creation of the new Great Barrier, raised her head. Her hair stuck to her forehead because her entire body was covered in sweat.

But Freya couldn't think of fixing her appearance. She blinked a few times with a dumbfounded expression and then let out a bewildered voice.

“Odin?”

The King of Gods, Odin. The one that had to command all the battles occurring in the ground.

His throne was empty.

She couldn't see Odin. He was gone.

< Episode 35 – Great War (6) > End

Episode 35/Chapter 7: Great War (7)

The Giant of Beasts, Ortr, opened his mouth widely. He charged towards Tae Ho and spat black fire that resembled the flames of hell.

Tae Ho didn't dodge it. He rather faced it head on and raised the Gunlance of the royal dragon. Rolo covered his entire body with the ensuing cloak of flames.

[Saga: Roar of the Dragon]

What he was using was the Draconic ballista. The piercing spear that would even pierce through the breath of fire.

Rolo folded his wings and charged towards the flames, and the Gunlance passed through the flame breath.

Explosions occurred in the sky in consecution. They were explosions that occurred inside the fire breath, but Rolo didn't lose balance. The blessing of the Master of Flames, Shootingstar, protected him, and the Gunlance opened a path for him.

They then finally reached him. Tae Ho and Rolo passed through the fire breath, and the Giant of Beasts, Ortr, swung his fist at almost the same time.

Tae Ho's spear moved. He carefully controlled Rolo with the 'One that Controls Dragons' saga.

The charge itself wasn't the only important part of a lance charge where each side collided with the other. If one just stabbed the other, then both of them would die. Because of that, one had to move precisely and minutely so that their attack reached their opponent first while their opponent's attack didn't touch them.

The trajectory drawn by the tip of Tae Ho's spear didn't cross the trajectory of the fist Ortr drew. They seemed like they would connect, but the attacks missed at the decisive moment.

Ortr's fist stabbed the air, and Tae Ho and Rolo dove behind it. The Gunlance then touched Ortr's chest.

All of this happened in an instant.

Ortr smiled bitterly as Tae Ho howled in triumph. The Gunlance had carved deeply into Ortr's chest!

The trajectory of the both of them now became one. Rolo pushed back Ortr with an overwhelming speed, and Tae Ho fixed the Gunlance and pulled the trigger in sequence. The head of a dragon that lay within the spear spat out fire consecutively.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Ortr's body shook every time an explosion was made. He swung his arms to catch Rolo, even while he was being driven to the ground, but then his arms got fended back.

Kwagang!

The last explosion burst out, and at that moment, Tae Ho let go of the Gunlance. Rolo fluttered his wings with all his strength and quickly fled the gravitational pressure.

Ortr crashed in the ground, and Rolo flew up once again with rough movements. Tae Ho's breaths were ragged atop him as he looked down at the ground.

Ortr vomited blood while having his chest burst open, and Loki approached him.

—

The King of Gods, Odin, had left Valhalla.

He, who was wearing a big hat and tattered robe, didn't leave behind any traces of his movements. There was no one that could check his actions while fierce battles were occurring in Midgard and Asgard.

Odin didn't pass through the Bifrost. He instead used a secret passageway that only he knew of to head to Mimir's lake and then

met the ones he had put on standby at the root of Yggdrasil.

They were all named warriors, but they were also ones that had faked their deaths or retired due to a myriad of reasons.

Because of that, no one, even those on the battlefield, had missed them.

In addition, not even the warriors Odin had gathered knew the general picture of what had happened a few minutes ago. Because it was impossible to count one's plans.

“Let's go, my warriors. Let's go to end the war.”

Odin spoke and took the lead. The warriors stood up and followed his back, and the great Viking king, Ragnar Lodbrok, smiled bitterly.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms,”

Someone said, and Odin nodded. His steps became faster.

—

The attitudes of the Five Fingers towards Loki were different from one another.

The Giant of the Night, Avalt, treated him as an enemy, and his rival, the Giant of Strength, Harad, showed good will towards him.

The Giant of Beasts was also one that showed good will towards him.

It wasn't a rational judgement. His beast-like senses were telling him that Loki was the same side as them.

And actually, Loki had been a loyal underling of the Magician King Utgard Loki for quite some time.

Because of that, the Giant of Beasts looked at Loki approaching him and became mystified. It wasn't because he'd appeared suddenly either.

Ortr's senses were warning him of great danger. His senses were

saying that Loki was an enemy.

What had happened?

Ortr couldn't come up with an answer. Loki executed the magic he had prepared for a long time and clenched his heart. At the same time, Tae Ho jumped down from Rolo's back. He stabbed the prototype of Fragarach in Ortr's neck, who couldn't move because of Loki's magic.

Ortr, who'd had his neck pierced by a huge sword, couldn't even scream. He had the strongest vitality among the Five Fingers, but he couldn't do anything to save himself. He flinched a few times and then didn't move anymore.

Tae Ho, who was almost hanging onto the huge hilt of the sword, let out a long sigh and slowly removed his hands. He landed on the chest of the fallen Ortr and looked at Loki.

Black flashes and fire pillars were descending from the sky. Adenmaha and McLaren were fighting against the giants with Merlin.

‘Explain, Loki!’

Idun yelled. Originally, her voice wouldn't have reached him, but Loki nodded. He looked at Tae Ho as if he had heard her voice and said,

“It will take too long to explain it with words. I will show you a memory.”

Loki drew a rune in the air. The rune of light that was the size of a palm flew towards Tae Ho.

Idun wanted to stop Tae Ho, but Cuchulainn stayed silent. Tae Ho placed his hand on the rune Loki had sent towards him after a moment of consideration.

Loki's magic activated, and a light-filled, chronological sequence of memories was transmitted.

—

The plan had started a dozen years ago.

—

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, was standing on the World Tree, Yggdrasil, which connected Asgard and Midgard.

It was something that no one would have been able to guess.

Because the attention of everyone would have been gathered upon the fights occurring in Asgard, the front lines, and in several places throughout Midgard.

The Magician King didn't act carelessly. He had guessed where the Gods of Asgard like Thor and strong warriors like Sigurd were fighting at and against whom.

Because of that, he thought that his plan had succeeded.

The objective of the Magician King wasn't to gather the soul fragments.

His real objective was reaching the nucleus of Yggdrasil without being interrupted.

He would destroy the nucleus of the World Tree and cut off the connection between Asgard and Midgard. He would then naturally wait for the destruction of Asgard.

All the things that had happened until now were merely preparations.

There was an island in the sea of death at the end of the world, and Yggdrasil passed through it as if penetrating it.

The Magician King landed on the island. He then walked towards Yggdrasil.

But there was someone waiting for him.

“We finally meet, Utgard Loki.”

The one standing before the World Tree was the King of Gods,

Odin.

—

The location where Garmr's soul fragment was first discovered was in the trace of the Great War located in Svartalfheim.

The moment they defeated the fire giant that was using a strong magic, Tae Ho and Siri were swept by the storm of magic power and thrown towards the trace of the Great War that was hidden in a crack of the world.

It wasn't a coincidence.

It was all planned by the Magician King.

—

"We will let Asgard know of the fact that the soul fragments of Garmr exist and that the giants of Jotunheim are searching for it. That was the objective of that battle."

—

Tae Ho and Siri being the ones swept up by it wasn't a coincidence, but Tae Ho obtaining a piece of Gae Bolg wasn't something planned on by the Magician King.

But until then, it wasn't that important.

Because of that, the Magician King proceeded with his plan.

—

Asgard started to search for Garmr's soul fragments like expected.

And the giants of Jotunheim also began a search of great magnitude to not lose them to Asgard.

Inevitably, Garmr's soul fragments were discovered, one by one, at suitable places.

The warriors of Valhalla and the giants of Jotunheim clashed to obtain the soul fragments.

—

“The death of the Giant of Strength, Harad, wasn’t planned, but thanks to that, Asgard grew to completely believe that the giants of Jotunheim were intricately obsessed with the soul fragments.”

—

The stage then moved to Midgard. Several soul fragments were discovered, and due to several cases, Asgard started to concentrate more on Midgard.

—

“The big picture remains the same, but the speed of the plan has been slowed. It’s because Idun’s warrior fought much better than expected.”

—

The death of the Giant of Earth, Balgad, also wasn’t in the plans. Now that the Magician King had lost two of the Five Fingers, he decided not to delay anymore.

He already had the necessary things anyways.

The Goddess of Magic, Freya, couldn’t trust in the security of the Great Barrier anymore. She had started to ponder whether she had to reinstall it or not even if Midgard was then exposed to the giants.

—

“The Magician King revealed the whole picture to the remaining Five Fingers, and he ordered the revealing of all soul fragments to the only one whom he had originally shared his plans with.”

—

A bunch of soul fragments appeared in the front lines, and several soul fragments were discovered in Midgard.

The giants passed through the holes that were in the Great

Barrier and started to invade Midgard.

Because of that, the Goddess of Magic, Freya, decided to remove the Great Barrier, and the King of Gods, Odin, agreed to her decision.

Because the objective of the giants was to gather the soul fragments.

They just had to retrieve it faster than them.

The king of the frost giants, Harmarti, marched in the front lines. Not only that, but high-named giants revealed their existences clearly in the battlefield. As a result, the Gods of Asgard didn't look anywhere else.

—

“We will dig in that opening. The Magician King will destroy the nucleus of Yggdrasil himself while everyone is preoccupied elsewhere.”

—

The Magician King gazed at Odin.

Odin took off his tattered robe and said,

“I wanted to meet you. I wanted to bring you out, you, who was shrinking down into the deepest places of Jotunheim, because a war will only end after one strikes the head of the king.”

The Magician King, Utgard Loki, wasn't the only giant king in Jotunheim, but he was the one that had the biggest force. The giants of Jotunheim could gather their strengths into one as he possessed a strong political power.

Odin knew all of the plans of the Magician King.

Because Odin also knew the only giant that the Magician King shared his plans with. That giant-no, that God was relaying to him the plans the Magician King would harness to his desires.

He knew that the Magician King already had all the soul fragments.

He also knew that the one that had put the soul fragments in Svartalfheim and scattered them in several places of Midgard was the Magician King.

But he still played by his palm.

He started to search the soul fragments more fervently. He didn't share the truth with Freya, Heimdall, or even Thor. As a result, they acted earnestly in everything.

He was also prepared for sacrifices. Loki had blocked Thor when they were fighting against the fomoiré king. He'd let that happen even by knowing that the warriors of Valhalla who had descended would suffer crushing casualties.

Because he had to make the Magician King trust in Loki.

Thor and everyone else had to play by the plans of the Magician King.

Just like the Magician King had exposed named giants, Odin had also exposed named warriors.

For the battle that was not related to the great war occurring in Asgard and Midgard, but for that one fight that would occur in the crevice of the world.

They needed a long time for that.

Loki could obtain the trust of the Magician King because of the hundred years that had passed.

Thanks to that past hundred years, the Magician King grew to believe in the magical nucleus that connected Midgard and Asgard.

Valhalla was also on the defensive since the Great War. They just defended instead of attacking.

Freya thought that it was to protect Asgard, Midgard, and everyone as the King of Gods.

Thor, Heimdall, and other Gods like Ullr and Hermod also thought similarly.

But that wasn't the case.

Odin had endured it and was patient.

For that one instant that he would bite the neck of his enemy.

And that was a really obvious thing.

“Because I'm the cruel and cunning God of War before the King of Gods.”

Odin gripped Gungnir, and the superior-ranked warriors that had retired or faked their deaths appeared behind him.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms,”

Someone uttered, and the warriors activated their sagas.

—

Idun panted with a dumbfounded face. She could only react as such to the plan Loki revealed.

Loki, who had betrayed Asgard when the Great War was coming to an end.

Loki, who had lived as a loyal underling of the Magician King for a hundred years.

It was a story that was hard to believe but also hard to doubt. His story was akin to an expertly fabricated lie.

“By now, the fight against the Magician King and Odin would have started.”

But of course, there was no way the Magician King would have gone alone; there was, however, a limit to the number of forces he could mobilize as he was hidden in Midgard.

On the other hand, Odin had been preparing for this fight since long ago. He had Ragnar Lodbrok and other great warriors next to him. In addition, Odin was an unrivaled warrior and magician at

the same time. As the island atop of the sea of death was Odin's magical territory, his chances of defeat were too low.

They would defeat the Magician King.

They would end what the strongest warrior in Erin, Cuchulainn, couldn't do in the Great War and bring the giants to an end.

The superior-ranked warriors that emerged down from the Black Flash started to fight against the giants. Even though they were in the middle of a fierce battlefield, the place Loki and Tae Ho were standing at was silent, just like the eye of a storm.

Tae Ho got down from the chest of Ortr. He moved quickly instead of explaining his actions to Loki.

'Tae Ho?'

Cuchulainn asked, but Tae Ho didn't stop. He went to the place he had sealed Garmr's soul fragment before fighting against Ortr and retrieved his divine power.

Perhaps it had been a meaningless thing.

Because the real objective of the Magician King wasn't to retrieve the soul fragments. In the first place, he was the one that had scattered them.

But Tae Ho still retrieved it. It wasn't because he didn't trust in Loki. It was because of the instinctive sense which lead the way to Tae Ho at important moments. The doubt that pinched a part of his head while listening to Loki's story made him act.

He had heard several things from Loki. The information had increased and his saga was strengthened thanks to Bragi's rune.

Tae Ho took one more step and then poured the divine power that got amplified by 'Idun's Warrior' into his 'Eyes of the Dragon'. He then checked Garmr's soul fragment once again. He could see things that he hadn't been able to until now.

[The Already Used]

[Garmr's Soul Fragment]

Tae Ho took a breath. He gritted his teeth and looked at the soul fragment.

The already used.

Something that wasn't in Loki's story.

At that moment, Cuchulainn let out a groan as if he had realized something. Tae Ho hurriedly turned towards Loki.

It wasn't because he doubted him. It was to tell him that they had to hurry.

But right at that moment, at that instant-

—

The Magician King believed in the God of Fire and Lies, Loki.

He couldn't know that Odin had all of this planned.

But he was also a king. He had a secret he hadn't revealed to anyone else.

The Magician King had all the soul fragments, but he didn't use them regardless of that.

Odin and Loki thought that it was because he couldn't use them.

Because he would have called the World Wolf beforehand if he could. He would use the World Wolf to attack Asgard from the front.

Because calling the World Wolf with the soul fragments was only possible in theory.

They thought like that.

He believed that to be the case.

The World Wolf hadn't appeared for the past hundred years.

But that thought was wrong.

“Why do I have to do so?”

Why does he have to reveal the World Wolf? Why does he have to use it to attack them from the front?

Why would he, when it could become a trump card to pierce the heart of the enemy at the decisive moment when no one could have expected it.

A decisive moment like the current one.

The Magician King looked at Odin. He activated his trump card magic that he had hidden since the Great War.

Above the head of the Magician King.

The thing that appeared while tearing space.

The howl of the World Wolf covered all of Midgard.

< Episode 35 – Great War (7) > End

Episode 36/Chapter 1: Odin (1)

The God of Olympus, Zeus, had once used the expression ‘enemy of the world’.

The sage that was in charge of a corner of the Temple had said that it was a shadow that couldn’t be detached whilst one lived in a sunny place.

Just like the concept of day and night existed, there had always been two forces in Asgard and the Ten Realms.

The ones that wish to maintain the world.

Those that want to destroy it.

The ones that wanted to maintain it were the living ones. Most of them represented the Gods of the world that hoped to maintain it and lead them

The Aesir and the Vanir of Asgard, the Gods of Olympus, the men of the Temple, and the Tuatha De Danann and the Milesians of Erin.

They didn’t need a reason to fight. For a person that was alive trying to keep living as instinct itself.

And the ones that wished for the destruction weren’t that different either.

The giants of Asgard, the titans of Olympus, the monsters of the Temple, and the fomoirs of Erin.

They were loyal to their instincts just like the ones that tried to maintain the world. They would destroy the world. Burn down everything and return it to its origin.

They were born like that. Even though they were living in the same world as the ones that wished to maintain it, they hoped for its destruction deep in their heart.

It was a thing that was hard to explain, and in the first place, it

couldn't really be understood at all.

The ones that wished to maintain the world and the ones that tried to destroy it weren't the same. They were existences that had a completely different way of thinking.

It wasn't excessive to say that the battles of the two forces meant the beginning and end of the world.

Erin was the most ideal example.

The ones that had won in Erin were the ones that hoped to destroy it, and because of that, Erin didn't exist anymore. They still couldn't return back to nothingness as there were still the other worlds remaining, but Erin became a land where life couldn't exist anymore.

A really long fight.

Because of that, it didn't always flow in the same way; however, in that long time, blood was mixed between the ones that wanted to maintain the world and the ones that tried to destroyed it.

The fomoires are also the best example this time.

The Great King, Cichol, king of the fomoires, was someone that simply wished for destruction. But some of his descendants started to desire conquering them rather than destroying.

Especially Bress, who'd had more blood of the Tuatha De Danann mixed in him, was someone that wished to maintain the world rather than destroy it.

The same thing happened in Asgard.

The amount of desire the giants had towards the destruction was different, and there were some that were born while wanting to maintain.

The God of Lies and Fire, Loki, embodied one such case.

The reason Odin gave him the identity of a God wasn't simply because he was a giant with deep connections to him. He was an

existence born at the tipping point between Gods and giants. Because of that, Odin gave him a rank to induce him closer to the side of Gods.

But even so, he was still a giant. There was a bit of desire for destruction left in his soul and body.

The reason he became attracted to the giant Angrboda was because of that instinct.

Angrboda was an existence opposite to Loki's lawful wife, Sigin.

She belonged to the Aesir, who wanted to maintain the world, and was a good and gentle, eminent woman.

Angrboda, who had received the dense blood of the ones that hoped to destroy, was evil, violent, and enjoyed the pain of others.

Three kids were born between Loki and Angrboda.

It wasn't excessive to say that the three were born at the same time.

When the first kid, Fenrir, was born, Loki thought that he would be able to control it.

When the second kid, Jormungand, was born, Loki still thought the same.

But when the third and last kid, Hela, was born, Loki realized that something wasn't right.

Fenrir and Jormungand were existences that wished to destroy.

The third kid Hela, was someone that was closer to Loki, that wanted to maintain. That's why Loki could sense that Hela was different from the two other kids that were born before her.

Loki couldn't kill Fenrir and Jormungand.

For Loki, who was a being that was closer to wanting to maintain, it wasn't easy to kill his own children that would continue the next generation.

Loki made up several excuses for himself.

Angrboda would interrupt. Even if one or more existences that wanted to destroy the world appeared, will it actually get destroyed?

Loki removed himself from Angrboda's bewitchment and fled to Asgard.

And this was Loki's second mistake.

The three children grew up to become transcendent beings under Angrboda.

The oldest, Fenrir, became a world wolf that would put an end to the world.

The second, Jormungand, grew to become a huge space snake that was able to swirl over all of Asgard.

The third, Hela, was an existence that had removed herself from the normal flow of time.

Time flowed, and the Great War started.

The world wolf and the space snake became even more of monsters after eating their mother, Angrboda, who was standing in the vanguard, and Loki fell in a deeper despair.

—

The howl of the World Wolf shook Midgard.

His cry transcended time and space just like Heimdall's horn trumpet, Gjallarhorn.

Loki felt dizzy. He understood in an instant what was going to happen.

The World Wolf that they thought they had barely managed to defeat in the Great War had returned, and in addition, he was now beside the Magician King.

Loki despaired once again, but that despair wasn't simply

because Fenrir was strong.

The World Wolf was born as the natural enemy of Odin.

He was a shackle of fate that not even the Gods could get away from.

Odin couldn't defeat the World Wolf. It wasn't excessive to say that Fenrir was born to kill Odin.

Loki gulped dry saliva. His head, that was squeezing out all the strategies possible, froze completely. He couldn't think of anything.

“Loki!”

Tae Ho called out to him and grabbed the collar of Loki, who had an absent-minded face.

Tae Ho didn't know about Odin's fate. He also didn't know about Loki's past or his deep despair.

But he was certain about one thing. He grasped the most important thing with Schathach's style insight.

“There's only us!”

Loki opened his eyes widely. He understood what Tae Ho was speaking about.

It was just like he had said.

Odin had played by the plans of the Magician King, and because of that, all the named warriors were fighting in the battlefields of Asgard and Midgard. Loki and Tae Ho were the only ones that could move to help Odin, who was now facing the World Wolf.

Loki started to move his hands. He drew complicated runes without hesitating.

Tae Ho raised his head. The superior-ranked warriors that rode upon the Black Flashes were fighting against the giants that came down the fire pillar. Their pallid faces reflected their surprise from

the howl uttered by the World Wolf without warning.

They lacked time, and in addition, they didn't know about the truth of Loki. There was a possibility they could attack Loki now that they had become agitated after hearing the howl of the World Wolf.

“Master!”

Adenmaha came running to Tae Ho after having transformed into a Goddess. She had realized that the situation wasn't normal and had gone immediately to Tae Ho.

Merlin was next to her. He took a deep breath when he saw that Tae Ho was with Loki, but it only lasted for a moment. He understood the situation when he saw that Tae Ho was facing him and that Loki was drawing runes. Instead of saying something, he also started to draw some runes and helped in Loki's magic.

“Idun's warrior.”

Loki called out Tae Ho. He then grabbed his hand and completed the magic.

Long distance teleportation magic.

A strong light gulped down Tae Ho and Loki.

—

The Magician King was standing. The World Wolf that appeared above him while roaring landed on the ground.

It was a wolf that had black fur and was so big it could gulp down a God in one bite.

His red eyes looked at Odin and the warriors of Valhalla.

The time they confronted each other was short. The World Wolf charged forward, and the Magician King waved his arms and activated strong magics.

“Odin!”

Ragnar charged forward and yelled as the superior-ranked warriors beside him sprinted towards Odin to stop the World Wolf.

But Odin himself couldn't react instantly. He'd only just gotten a hold of himself when the World Wolf opened its mouth and raised his head.

The warriors poured out attacks to the World Wolf and covered Fenrir.

But the World Wolf didn't stop for even a moment. He received the attacks of the warriors with its bare body and gaped open its mouth. He then bit the air and activated a saga.

[Saga: The Jaw of the World Wolf]

It was a strength he could use as he had inherited the blood of Loki, who was close to being a God. The jaw of the World Wolf that would gulp down the several warriors and Gods and even the world.

The overwhelming strength swept up the surroundings of the World Wolf. From below to above, and from above to below, everything was crushed as if it had entered the mouth of the World Wolf itself.

The warriors reacted immediately and tried to get out of the reach of the World Wolf, but not everyone could dodge it. One of the warriors was caught by the 'Jaw of the World Wolf'. The huge teeth that were invisible tore open his chest.

The World Wolf opened its mouth once again and then rushed towards the warrior that was closest to him.

At the same time, the Magician King activated several magics. He fired a huge whirlpool of fire and lightning towards the warriors.

"Odin!"

Ragnar yelled once again. He gazed at the whirlpool that seemed like it would tear away reality instead of looking at the warriors

that couldn't stop the charge of the World Wolf. He pulled his viking sword from its sheath and thought of a method to connect the warriors.

Right at that moment, Odin finally showed some retaliation. He let out a roar and activated the magics that were prepared in the island.

He was the God of War, and at the same time, the God of Magic. The pillars of ice that surged up from the ground pierced the whirlpools of fire and thunder and destroyed them. The ground split up without any warning, and the World Wolf fell into an opening crack.

Odin looked at the Magician King with his only eye, and the Magician King activated another magic. He looked at the web of lightning that amounted to tens of thousands of threads and raised his right arm. Then, the ground rose up to form a wall and blocked the lightning.

Kwagagagagagang!

Loud sounds were heard, and in that time, half the superior-ranked warriors prepared themselves as the other half charged towards the Magician King.

Ragnar looked at the World Wolf that had fallen into a crevice. It was just like he'd expected. He wouldn't be able to hold it down with just that.

Krung!

The ground shook like an earthquake, and the ground that was restraining the World Wolf split up and became dust. The World Wolf took a big leap and howled.

It wasn't a normal cry. It was a cry that twisted the will of the warriors and was capable of breaking magic.

The Magician King glared at the superior-ranked warriors charging towards him and moved his hand. Spontaneously, black

giants surged up from the shadow of the Magician King and charged towards the superior-ranked warriors.

A battle occurred. The shadow giants weren't opponents to the superior-ranked warriors, but they could at least buy some time, and that was the objective of the Magician King. He would buy time for the World Wolf to get rid of Odin. In the present moment, time was at the side of the Magician King.

Odin threw Gungnir towards the World Wolf. The magical spear, that boasted of its absolute accuracy, flew at an overwhelming speed and pierced the right eye of the World Wolf.

The eye of the wolf broke, and blood flowed like a fountain, but it still didn't stop. It activated the 'Jaw of the World Wolf' instead of crying in pain.

A part of the world broke down once again. A huge line was drawn in the left side of the island that had the World Tree in it, and everything that stood upon that line was destroyed. The part of the island that was outside the line broke down and sank into the sea.

It was the strength of the World Wolf that transcended common sense, and in addition, the World Wolf was becoming stronger as time progressed. His size was now twice as big from when he'd first appeared.

Ragnar and the warriors didn't think of retreating. They valiantly charged towards the World Wolf, and at the same time, Ragnar used rune magic to transmit his thoughts to Odin.

'Flee!'

Odin couldn't beat the World Wolf.

That was fate.

Odin's divine power and magic weakened in the wolf's presence.

And on the other hand, the World Wolf grew stronger in front of

Odin.

Ragnar's words were right. He had to follow his words to retreat and prepare for what would come next.

But Odin couldn't react immediately. It wasn't only because he feared the World Wolf. He was a king and a warrior. He couldn't leave behind the warriors that were throwing their lives away for him. He couldn't escape while showing his back to the enemy.

A moment of hesitation.

He couldn't turn away. The World Wolf passed through the warriors to charge towards Odin, and it opened its mouth once again.

Odin looked at that World Wolf. He saw its throat that was deep and void like a black hole.

At that moment, Odin remembered Mimir's words. It was a curse-like message that he had heard without pause.

'The day the World Wolf awakens, the clear yet foolish King of Gods that resists to it will become dog food.'

He wasn't wrong.

He couldn't evade fate.

The 'Jaw of the World Wolf' activated, and the strength that generated from the sky and ground flooded towards Odin.

He would die.

This was the end.

Odin thought like that. He had fought against fate for all his life, but it was now time to give in to it.

But right at that instant—

When Odin was about to close his eyes—

A strong light tore through space, and the after effects of the long distance teleportation shook the world a little bit.

The Magician King turned his head, and Loki, who had appeared while opening up the space, yelled something.

And there was someone swinging his sword.

There was someone standing in front of Odin trying to resist to the invisible teeth.

Odin couldn't breathe. He remembered another word of Mimir in the time that seemed to have stopped.

'72.972 in 100.000.'

The first change.

The day that the rate of destruction, that was only becoming higher, got lower.

And the existence that provoked that change.

Odin looked at the golden apple tree that was engraved in the cape of the warrior.

And yelled unconsciously.

"Idun's warrior!"

Tae Ho swung Caliburn and blocked the teeth of the World Wolf with the sword of the king.

< Episode 36 – Odin (1) > End

Episode 36/Chapter 2: Odin (2)

Uld, the oldest of the three sisters, raised her head.

She, who represented the past, grabbed the end of the threads of fate that split into several parts.

Verdandi pulled on the strands of the thread Uld was grabbing and made a new one.

She, who represented the future, couldn't see the future. The future wasn't something that split from various strings.

Skuld, who'd remained in Vanaheim, touched the air. She touched the thread of fate that hadn't been made and understood why she had gone to Vanaheim and why she had met Idun's warrior for a moment.

Even if it was her, who represented the future, she couldn't see the exact future. And that was rather a blessing because nothing more despairful existed than a fixed future.

Skuld moved her fingers once again and thought of the past to foresee the future.

The reason the thread of fate, that held the fate of the world, touched Idun's legion.

It was this moment. Right now, Idun's warrior had been deeply entwined within the fate of the world.

What would the results be? What kind of future will it give birth to?

Skuld gathered her hands and called out the name of the warrior of Idun.

—

That was a miracle made by layers of coincidences having been piled up.

The moment the World Wolf tried to gulp down Odin, the teleportation magic of Loki reached the island that was on the sea of death.

The space magic having appeared right next to Odin was inevitable, as Loki had set up Odin as the destination point.

But the reason that the long distance teleport had been executed right before Fenrir bit Odin down, and the reason that the world had shaken because of the after effect of the magic and the two having appeared inside the jaw of the World Wolf was all a coincidence.

“Idun’s warrior!”

Odin yelled, and Tae Ho heard his voice. He instinctively realized who was behind him.

The ‘Jaw of the World Wolf’ was approaching from the sky and the ground. Originally, those teeth shouldn’t have been visible, but Tae Ho was able to see them with the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’.

Loki and Merlin couldn’t move after having used the long distance teleport magic. Adenmaha, who’d entered the space magic a bit late, bounced away the moment the teleportation ended and rolled quite a distance away from them.

Tae Ho was alone right now. Cuchulainn yelled something quickly, but Tae Ho couldn’t know what he had said exactly. Still, he understood the purpose of his words completely.

‘Stab it!’

[Strengthened Saga]

[The Eye of the Dragon Sees through all Things]

An opening was seen. The weakness of the World Wolf that had been created for an instant after the world was shaken by space magic was seen.

[Saga: King of Camelot]

[Saga: Idun's Warrior]

Tae Ho poured out Idun's divine power into Caliburn in an instant. There was no time to concentrate that power. One could say that he had almost detonated the power in his haste.

The glory of Camelot appeared from Caliburn, and Tae Ho stabbed it while being guided by the 'Eye of the Dragon'. He stabbed in the air, and at the same time, released Camelot's glory that was shining with Idun's golden divine power.

All of this happened in a short time. Tae Ho stabbed the upper jaw right before the mandible closed.

The world shook once again, and the 'Jaw of the World Wolf' shook as well.

Tae Ho howled and burst out his divine power once again. The divine power of Idun that flowed through Caliburn exploded in the jaw of the world wolf and then dissipated it.

A soundless shock shook both heaven and earth. As the upper jaw disappeared, the lower jaw also disappeared naturally.

"Kuhak!"

Tae Ho let out a pained voice. He felt like his right arm would break because he had used the power too suddenly.

Idun's divine power covered his right arm and her earnest voice reached him.

'Tae Ho. My warrior, Tae Ho.'

Tae Ho panted and looked at his front. He didn't have the leisure to answer Idun, and Cuchulainn yelled one more time.

'There is no second time! Hurry up!'

It was a miracle having dispersed the attack, and everyone present here knew that truth.

Everyone showed their own movements.

Ragnar raised his viking sword and leapt towards the World Wolf.

The Magician King let out an aggravated grunt and activated about ten magics at the same time.

Merlin left the aftershock of the space magic and looked in front of him. Although he was old and exhausted, he reflexively opened his mouth and recited a new chant.

Loki also got a hold of himself and he fell in a deep despair once again.

It was because the moment the 'Jaw of the World Wolf' disappeared, he made eye contact with the one that moved the fastest.

The World Wolf, Fenrir.

It had no rationality in its eyes. Only madness and rage.

Loki knew how Fenrir had become like that. It wasn't because of its nature which desired to destroy the world.

The fire association.

An organization of the ones that wish for the destruction of the world. The ones leading all of them. It was the real reason Loki had infiltrated the giants when the Great War was coming to an end!

Fenrir looked at Loki. Its eyes weren't those of one looking at his parent. The only emotion it had in its eyes was the cruelty of a predator looking at its prey.

The World Wolf was bigger than anyone in the island. Even the Magician King, who stood tens of meters tall, only reached its shoulder.

But regardless of that, the World Wolf was faster than anyone. The moment Ragnar leapt, the World Wolf was already crossing space.

Loki hurriedly extended his arms. He couldn't even think of making magic and only released a strong magic power.

The World Wolf didn't stop. It only threw itself towards the magic Loki released and dispersed it with a stronger charge.

[Saga: The One that Conceives a Catastrophe]

The World Wolf activated another saga, but it didn't belong to it.

A scream that resembled the cry of the banshee queen spread out from the back of the World Wolf.

Loki fell into despair once again. It was because he recognized in an instant what the black flames that had surged up from the back of the wolf represented.

The giant, Angrboda.

The giant that had conceived catastrophes like the World Wolf, Fenrir, and the Space Snake, Jormungand, and that had once shared love with Loki

Her scream became lethal blades and hacked the consciousness of Loki and all the others. It was a strong curse that gave one a shock which increased in strength the more people that were killed in the battlefield.

Ragnar, who was in midair, collapsed. The superior-ranked warriors let out pained groans, and the Magician King used seven of the ten spells he was about to activate on himself to offset the effect. The curse of Angrboda was that strong.

The one that was influenced the least was Tae Ho. It was because the time he stood on the battlefield was short, and Idun was using all her strength to protect Tae Ho.

Idun, who poured out an overwhelming amount of divine power, clenched her chest and fell down. She couldn't even call Tae Ho's name right now.

Tae Ho looked in front of him. The World Wolf, that had broken through Loki's magic, was closing the distance at a tremendous speed. It seemed like its teeth would bite him in half should Tae Ho

blink even once.

Tae Ho moved. He grabbed the strengthless Odin with an arm and then threw his body. It really was by a breath of a hair. The moment Tae Ho threw himself, he saw the World Wolf biting the air.

‘Get a hold of yourself! We are doing as we planned!’

Cuchulainn bolstered up Tae Ho. Tae Ho gritted his teeth to swing his sword once again towards the World Wolf and then created some distance with it by kicking the air in consecution. In the first place, he had already decided to do so the moment Loki had begun preparing the teleportation magic.

He would take Odin and escape.

He would rescue the King of Gods.

“Go!”

Loki yelled. He held down the World Wolf by releasing all his magic power at once while blood flowed from all the holes in his body. The stakes Merlin promptly summoned pierced the body of the World Wolf and fixed it to the ground.

But it was only for a moment. Realizing this, Tae Ho put back Caliburn and took out the item he’d received from Skuld with his other hand in a single, fluid motion. It was an escape rock that he could use to save himself in urgent situations.

If he used it, he would teleport through time.

Tae Ho added strength into his hand. He broke the rock that had a rune the size of a thumb and tried to activate the magic in it.

Idun panted and looked at Tae Ho. Loki and Merlin, who were holding down the World Wolf, yelled almost at the same time.

The World Wolf threw its body. As it moved with a strength that was stronger than Thor, who boasted of having the best strength amongst the Gods, the stakes moved as well. The World Wolf

wasn't safe after that, but it didn't mind even a little bit. It spat out black fire that held a cursed power, just like the blood of Ymir, and opened its mouth towards Tae Ho and Odin.

[Saga: Jaw of the World Wolf]

The upper jaw touched the sky and the lower jaw touched the ground. It put everything at the surroundings at its side and fixed the space between.

The space magic didn't activate, and at the same time, the jaws started to close. The World Wolf moved once again and tried to gulp down Tae Ho and Odin.

Tae Ho put a stronger magic power in the escape rock and, right then, Odin moved.

“Gungnir!”

When he yelled, Gungnir which was still lodged in its eye, started to spin fiercely and presented a new agony to the World Wolf.

Odin wasn't done. He tried to resist against his fate desperately, and that wasn't only for himself.

He would save Idun's warrior. He wouldn't turn him into dog food in a place like this.

Odin's divine power had gotten really weak before the World Wolf, who was his fated natural enemy, but Odin was still the King of Gods. He was the God of War and Magic. He used all of his wisdom and techniques available to create a new magic. This time, Odin stood in front of Tae Ho and blocked the 'Jaw of the World Wolf'.

“Odin!”

Loki cried out.

The invisible teeth of the World Wolf penetrated Odin, and at the same time, the World Wolf charged towards the two of them while letting a roar filled with pain and rage.

Angrboda screamed once again, and Adenmaha, who'd risen up only now in the distance, cried and shouted,

“Master!”

There was no reply. The mouth of the World Wolf gulped down Tae Ho and Odin.

—

Idun couldn't say anything with her stupefied expression. She, who was already sitting down, collapsed, strengthless.

She didn't feel Tae Ho.

She couldn't feel him.

Idun trembled. She groaned once again and then started to cry like a kid.

—

The Magician King laughed. The presence of Odin had disappeared completely from Midgard, so this meant that the World Wolf had turned the prophecy into reality.

Odin, who had said that he would strike his head and end this war.

The Magician King agreed with him. His words weren't a little bit wrong.

Because there was nothing one would be able to do when they lost your head.

The Magician King gazed out before him and looked at the warriors of Asgard and Loki who were putting despairful expressions.

He would now do what Odin had said.

He would strike Asgard, that had lost its head, and bring the war to an end.

Magic surged up from the two hands of the Magician King.

—

Uld and Verdandi were the past and the present. That's why they knew what had happened in the island that was on the death of sea.

Uld prepared a new thread. It was connected by several strands, but the end of it held only despair.

—

Mimir, who was left alone in his lake, opened his mouth.

He said out loud even though he knew that no one was listening to him.

“The day the World Wolf awakens, the foolish but clear King of Gods, Odin, will become dog food.”

The World Wolf had woken up and had clashed with the King of Gods, and finally, fate caught up with Odin.

But the words of Mimir didn't end. It continued to speak.

“The probabilities are 12.792 of 100.000.”

The probabilities changed drastically, and right now, a new change occurred. The head of Mimir didn't stop speaking.

“As Odin has evaded the fate of turning into dog food, he won't stop his fight against fate.”

The one next to Odin. The one that would fight against fate with him.

“Idun's warrior.”

The head of Mimir stopped talking and leaned his ear on the sound that was heard far away.

—

Skuld, who represented the future, was different than the others. She could see a strand of hope that was hidden in the despair.

Skuld hurriedly left Vanaheim.

She needed a new thread of fate.

—

Tae Ho closed his eyes. No, he was already closing it.

He couldn't feel Idun's power. His connection to her had been severed.

It was the first time this had happened since he'd entered Valhalla, and because of that, Tae Ho could get a hold of himself even though he was exhausted. He hurriedly opened his eyes like someone that had just woken up from a nightmare and looked in front of him.

“Did you wake up?”

The owner of the really exhausted voice was Odin. He had become a rag as his entire body was torn apart by the teeth of the World Wolf.

But he didn't die. He had certainly survived and was now facing Tae Ho with his only eye.

“I was lucky. No, it must have been the results of my desperate struggle.”

The escape rock Skuld which had given him had activated in the end. But originally, the rock that should have sent them to a safe place in Midgard was influenced by the ‘Jaw of the World Wolf’, and the magic power Odin squeezed out had exploded.

Tae Ho felt the pain that was covering his entire body and rose up. He looked at his surroundings and realized that it was a place he'd never before seen.

The roots of a gargantuan tree were poking out of the ground. The place Tae Ho and Odin were at was at one of the crevices of that root.

“Where....is this?”

Tae Ho barely managed to squeeze out his voice to ask, but Odin waited for a moment before answering. It was because a sound would be heard that would tell him where this place was.

A sound that resembled thunder shook the sky covered with fog.

It was a familiar sound for Odin, but it was the first time for him too to listen it this close.

Tae Ho panted and listened to the loud sound and then understood that it wasn't a loud sound but a roar of a dragon.

Tae Ho remembered a story Heda had told him before and looked at Odin. He then nodded.

“This is the end of the world.”

One of the deepest roots of Yggdrasil and the place where the World Tree had grown from.

Tae Ho understood why his connection with Idun had been severed and remembered who the roar's owner was.

The wicked dragon, Nidhogg, that lived in the roots of Yggdrasil. Its cry shook the sky once again.

< Episode 36 – Odin (2) > End

Episode 37/Chapter 1: The one that conquers (1)

The World Tree, Yggdrasil, started with the beginning of the world.

Because of that, one could say that the root of Yggdrasil was the beginning and end of the world.

It was the beginning because the world had started in that place and was the end because it was located in the depths of the world.

Tae Ho remembered the classes he'd had with Heda every night.

He had certainly heard about the World Tree when she was explaining about the world.

The materialized Yggdrasil was merely a part of the real World Tree, but the size of it was so massive that it pierced through the underworld, Niflheim, the mortal world, Midgard, and the world of Gods, Asgard.

The lower one went in Yggdrasil, the bigger and thicker it became, but the part that was below even Niflheim was really an unknown world.

One couldn't find a path in that place that was always covered by a thick fog. Even if they said that it was huge, one might think that they could just climb it, but that wasn't the case. Normal humans or fairies went down when they believed that they were going up, so they couldn't grasp their sense of direction.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the lake of Mimir, Odin's secret place, was in the middle of that fog. Because of that, no one could get close to it if they weren't invited.

'It's fine up to the lake of Mimir. If they are Gods with a strong divine power, they may be able to find the right path.'

But the story changed the lower one got. The really dense fog

severed the root from all the other worlds.

Tae Ho couldn't understand well what that meant when he was listening to the class. That's why he just took it as being a severed bridge.

It wasn't a completely wrong comparison. It was rather closer to the answer. When Tae Ho climbed down the root by himself, he got to know what severing really meant.

He couldn't feel Idun. His connection to her had gotten cut off. Perhaps, she may think that Tae Ho had died.

Tae Ho tried hard to stay calm.

Whatever the case, Tae Ho was alive right now and Odin was in front of him, even if he was in an awful state. He would be able to overcome this situation somehow.

"How much time has passed?"

"I don't know exactly. About three or four days may have passed."

Odin answered directly Tae Ho's question. It wasn't good news. Three or four days was a really long time. He felt a horrible feeling even by imagining what could have happened in their absence.

The first thing he thought of was the well being of Adenmaha, Merlin, and Ragnar. What had happened to the three of them? Were they able to escape from the World Wolf?

Tae Ho took out a summoning rock reflexively and inserted magic power into it, but it was pointless. Adenmaha did not appear.

'It's not because she is dead.'

Because his connection with Idun had also been severed. Even if it was a summoning rock, he wouldn't have been able to call Adenmaha.

That's why it was fine. It didn't mean anything had happened to

her.

Tae Ho spoke to himself a few times as if trying to calm down himself and looked at Odin. Several things popped in his head, but unfortunately, he couldn't say it out loud.

It wasn't only because he was worried about him.

He had heard the plan that Odin had come up with from Loki.

That's why there was no need to ask it by now. Disrespect aside, asking why his plan had failed was more of a detriment to their situation than anything else.

“Are there no methods to ascend?”

Because of that, Tae Ho asked the most important question right now. Odin opened and closed his eyes once and then said with an exhausted voice, “It's not that there are none. It's only really hard.”

Tae Ho felt uneasy just by hearing him, but the answer satisfied him for the time being. Because it meant that there was a way to return to Asgard. It wasn't impossible.

But of course, returning didn't mean that it was proper because Asgard would be battling head on against the giants of Jotunheim.

In addition, the situation was bad.

There was a high probability for the Gods of Asgard to think that Odin was dead.

Using the army as an example, the supreme commander had died as soon as the war broke out.

On top of that, the World Wolf, Fenrir, was added, so one could say that the situation was one akin to a sense of impending doom.

‘Calm down. Calm down, Lee Tae Ho.’

Tae Ho took some breaths. If he grew impatient here, escaping would become much more difficult. Just like there was the saying

that one had to return the more urgent a situation was, this was now the time to calm himself down.

“You are calm.”

Odin smiled bitterly and said in a low voice.

“Idun’s warrior, before telling you the method to escape this place, I want to express my gratitude to you.”

Odin rose himself up in a mess and placed his fist upon his chest. He then hit his chest twice and faced Tae Ho.

“I have been able to stay alive thanks to your aid. I succeeded in changing the despairing fate. I express my thanks as the King of Gods.”

He was a mess, but Odin was still the King of Gods. It wasn’t easy for him to express his thanks sincerely towards a warrior of Valhalla.

“I just did what I had to as Idun’s warrior.”

Tae Ho answered reflexively. When he saw movies or novels he always criticized the characters because they only said sweet words, but now that he was in a similar situation, he didn’t have anything to say aside of those words.

Odin smiled, and Tae Ho quickly realized something previously unknown to him.

Odin was a warrior of Valhalla before becoming the King of Gods. Although he was wearing countless masks, his nature wouldn’t be much different to a warrior of Valhalla’s.

“If we return, and if we do manage to win, I will give you a big reward. I will grant you anything you wish.”

Odin said with serious eyes as if he wasn’t just saying it as a thanks. His eyes were rather similar to Ragnar’s.

“Thank you.”

Tae Ho answered with the most ideal answer this time but then someone clicked his tongue.

‘You don’t refuse. Right, you have to receive when you are given. Just tell him to marry you to Freya.’

“Cuchulainn!”

Tae Ho answered out loud at the voice that rang in his head. It was because it was that nice to see him back.

Cuchulainn continued speaking when Tae Ho hurriedly took out Gae Bolg.

‘Why, is it that nice to see me? Do you feel reassured just by listening to my name?’

Tae Ho nodded. It was because that was indeed the case.

He was acting rather calm to this situation, but honestly speaking, it was hard on him. He was at the level where he was barely able to stay calm.

But he felt more relaxed when he heard Cuchulainn’s voice. He felt like he would be able to overcome this just like he had done in previous tight spots.

Because of that, Tae Ho answered to the first thing Cuchulainn said.

‘But why does it have to be Freya? Heda is much prettier. Idunnim could be better than her too.’

‘I don’t know what expression I should put on at situations like this.’

Cuchulainn answered as if he was tired of Tae Ho’s opinions.

But of course, the two of them were joking right now.

Their joking marked the thankful return of a more composed atmosphere.

“Is it the Prince of Light?”

Odin looked at Tae Ho, precisely speaking at Gae Bolg, and asked. Cuchulainn materialized and appeared next to Tae Ho just like he'd done in Scathach's residence. It was Odin's magic.

"It's been a really long while, King of Gods, Odin."

Cuchulainn bowed lightly and expressed etiquette, and Odin nodded.

"I did hear some stories, but it's been a while seeing you directly like this. Is it impolite if I say that you look much better now than in the Great War?"

"No. Your words are right. I also feel that the current me is much better."

Because the Cuchulainn in the Great War had gone mad for seeking revenge.

But it was different now. He had recovered his mental state just like when he'd been renowned as the Prince of Light.

'In addition, Master is also here.'

Scathach, whose location during the Great War had been a mystery to all, was now in Idun's residence. Cuchulainn was satisfied just by that fact alone.

Odin still gazed thoughtfully at Cuchulainn before he turned to Tae Ho and said, "Let's proceed with what I was saying. Just like I told you before, there's a method to get out of here, although that method is really difficult."

Odin paused for a moment and then closed his eyes and leaned his ear towards the surroundings. Not long after that, a roar shaking the skies was heard from far away.

"Do you know who is the owner of that roar?"

"Isn't it the wicked dragon, Nidhogg?"

As Tae Ho answered after he'd remembered the classes with Heda, Odin nodded.

“Right, that’s true. The black, venomous dragon, Nidhogg, that lives in the roots of Yggdrasil.....You could say that this place is its nest.”

Several roars were heard after that as if adding further weight to Odin’s words. Odin opened his only eye sharply and said, “It has been looking for us since before. It’s obvious for it, the owner of this land, to want to chase away the uninvited guests, but we can’t only evade it. It’s because it is the only method for us to escape this place.”

“Are you saying....that we will ride on Nidhogg and climb up?”

As Cuchulainn asked with a doubtful face, Odin shook his head.

“It’s similar but different. Nidhogg has been entrapped in the roots since the beginning of the world. It isn’t able to leave this place with its own strength.”

Actually, the problem lay closer to an approval of sorts, but the important thing was that Nidhogg wasn’t able to leave the roots.

“But there is an existence that can. It’s the only one that can freely go from the roots to the branches of Yggdrasil.”

“The beast, Ratatoskr.....”

Tae Ho said reflexively.

He had also learned about this from Heda’s classes.

The three beasts living in the World Tree.

The venomous dragon, Nidhogg, that lives by chewing the roots of the world tree.

The huge, white eagle, Hraesvelgr, that sits in the highest branch and is the origin of all strong winds.

The squirrel, Ratatoskr, that can freely travel to both sides and made Nidhogg and Hraesvelgr into enemies when they couldn’t even see each other.

“Right, that’s the only one, and to catch it, we need the help of Nidhogg, the owner of a part of this land.”

Odin spoke of the method to get away from this place in a terse manner. They could plentifully talk about the other things at a later time.

Cuchulainn, who’d listened to all the explanations of Odin, put on a thinking face and then asked, “Odin, is Nidhogg certainly a dragon?”

“That’s right. It’s an ancient dragon that ranks supreme even among its own kin.”

Cuchulainn turned to look at Tae Ho at Odin’s answer. Tae Ho also nodded as he knew why Cuchulainn had asked if it was a dragon or not.

Tae Ho’s saga, ‘The One that Controls Dragons’.

But of course, his adversary was the ancient beast, Nidhogg. They couldn’t know how much Tae Ho’s saga would work.

But there was still a probability as it was a dragon. One could say that it was a ray of hope.

Cuchulainn checked Tae Ho’s smile and then asked with a more serious expression, “Then, Odin, I will ask you one more thing. It’s something really important.”

“What is it, Prince of Light?”

Odin also answered with a serious expression. In addition, Tae Ho gulped dry saliva at the serious atmosphere.

And Cuchulainn finally opened his mouth and asked,

“Is Nidhogg a male or a female?”

“Uh....what?”

Odin blinked his eyes and asked back, and Tae Ho put on a dumbfounded expression.

—

“What, did I say something wrong? It is important.”

< Episode 37 – The one that conquers (1) > End

Episode 37/Chapter 2: The one that conquers (2)

“What, did I say something wrong? It’s important.”

“What is?! It’s the same anyways!”

Tae Ho talked back strongly as Cuchulainn spoke with a casual face.

Whatever the case, he wasn’t lying.

The number of draconic races Tae Ho had suppressed with the ‘One that Controls Dragons’ were few, but most of them were male.

The demon he first captured in the mine of the dwarves, the wyvern he handled in the Black Fortress, Rolo, who he had turned into his underling, and McLaren, who got to accompany him in Nidavelir.

“What, all of them were male excluding Adenmaha!”

“Hey, so Siri and Rasgrid aren’t female?”

“Well, the two of them fought together with me as comrades, not as beings that were suppressed. It’s completely different.”

The ability of the ‘One that Controls Dragons’ didn’t only stop at suppressing draconic races. It also had the ability to synchronize one’s consciousness with them and share their senses and thoughts.

Cuchulainn revealed eyes stewn with complaints, but he soon grew surprised and said,

“Huk, for most of them to be male.....you, do you.....you didn’t look at me with those eyes until now, right? Um.... it’s not that I dislike you, but....I’m sorry. I don’t think I will be able to respond to your feelings.”

Tae Ho was completely lost for words as Cuchulainn apologized with a serious face. He just let out a sigh and called the name of Idun.

“Oh, my Idun.”

“It’s a joke. A joke. Do you think I don’t know of your preferences?”

Cuchulainn laughed as if it was really fun.

It seemed like he’d meant to lighten up the atmosphere, and it had actually grown noticeably livelier, but Tae Ho felt rather pitiful now. For this kind of person to be the Prince of Light, just what kind of place was Erin?

As he was thinking about things that would repulse Merlin and the Knights of the Round Table if they got to know what he was thinking about, the one that was being excluded in the conversation opened his mouth.

“I want to know what you are talking about.”

It was Odin. As Tae Ho became embarrassed and didn’t know what to say, Cuchulainn spoke in his stead.

“Odin, we were talking about the saga this guy possesses.”

“Saga?”

“Yes, it’s a saga called ‘The One that Controls Dragons’”.

Cuchulainn erased all his playfulness and started to explain details of Tae Ho’s saga.

Odin nodded after hearing everything.

“The one that controls dragons....So, it’s a saga that can employ resistance towards draconic races?”

“Yes but only...I’ve never used it on a real dragon.”

Tae Ho answered with a dark expression. Part of it was because of Cuchulainn’s provocation, but whatever the case, he had never

suppressed a real dragon once with ‘The One that Controls Dragons’.

The ones that belonged to the draconic race were Adenmaha and McLaren, but both of them were merely serpents, a subspecies of dragon. There was quite a distance between them.

Odin shook his head at Tae Ho’s preoccupation.

“There won’t be any problems, and perhaps, it may bring out a bigger effect. For the title of the saga to have ‘dragon’ in it instead of monster or demon means that all of the power of the saga is concentrated on dragons as a species. It’s more logical for it to show a stronger effect on a real dragon rather than upon.....subspecies like a sea serpent or a rock serpent.”

It was the opinion of none other than Odin. Although the saga was a granted power of a world, Asgard, the one that had moulded it and diffused it to the warriors was the King of Gods and the God of magic, Odin.

Actually, no one could disagree with his opinion as the conclusion came from the one that had the most profound knowledge about the saga.

“Indeed.....”

Cuchulainn nodded with an admiring expression. it was because he realized that the saga of a title had more meaning than he’d previously thought.

And that was the same for Tae Ho.

‘So was it because of that?’

There were two sagas that belonged to Tae Ho that had changed titles.

‘The Warrior’s Equipment’ and ‘The One that Controls Dragons’.

The original name of the two sagas were ‘Sword of the Warrior’ and ‘The One that Handles Dragons’, respectively.

When it was ‘Sword of the Warrior’, Tae Ho could only recreate weapons with it, but after it became the ‘Warrior’s Equipment’, Tae Ho was able to also make defensive gear.

It was the same for ‘The One That Controls Dragons’. As the one that controls is naturally stronger than the one that handles, the controlling power towards a dragon became stronger.

“The title of a saga isn’t created randomly. You could say that the title is a kind of essence that resumes the story behind it.”

No cases existed that the title of the saga was different to its effect.

“The more detailed a title is, the more detailed the effects, but instead, its effects get easier to narrow down. Normally, titles that come in the form of a sentence are such cases. On the other hand, if it’s an abstract title, even if its immediate effects are vague, if you investigate and develop it more, there’s a possibility you may be able to use several abilities at once.”

He had heard something similar from Ragnar.

‘My saga, ‘King of Vikings’, or your ‘Idun’s Warrior’ and ‘King of Camelot’ are titles that are easy to put anywhere. The reason smaller sagas can be added to my ‘King of Vikings’ and your ‘King of Camelot’ is also because of that. This is something that may happen in the future, but ‘Idun’s Warrior’ may be able to grow into an independent saga that can have smaller sagas within it.’

Tae Ho nodded.

But Odin opened his only eye sharply while looking at Tae Ho.

‘Idun’s warrior.’

The warrior that got called to Valhalla even though he belonged to another world.

It was rare, but there were precedents of this. Idun and other Gods thought that it was a coincidence that occurred at times, but

Odin and Freya thought differently.

Not a coincidence, but a necessity.

A result of a work that occurred due to the will of something.

‘The One that Controls Dragons’ was a really strong saga as the user could control dragons, a species that stood at the top rank of predators in any world.

But Tae Ho had had that kind of saga ever since he’d been a lowest-ranked warrior.

‘If there were several warriors of Idun....if there were two or three of them.’

It wasn’t something he thought suddenly. He had thought of this since he got to know of Tae Ho’s existence.

But it was also a new thought.

Because Odin had made several experiments after he’d gotten word of Tae Ho’s existence.

Odin ordered the God of Messages, Hermod, to forcefully bring the pro gamers to Valhalla.

The results were pitiful. He had brought about ten pro-gamers, but not even one of them could create a saga.

The difference between Tae Ho and them was clear.

Tae Ho was a soul that the system of the world, the system which selected the warriors that would enter Valhalla, had accepted, and the rest of them were souls that Odin had brought forcefully.

Odin didn’t tell the results of his experiments to anyone.

In the first place, the only ones that knew the general outline of Tae Ho’s abilities and birth place were Idun and Freya, but the two of them couldn’t even think of forcefully bringing other pro-gamers to Valhalla.

Because one had to first die to enter it.

It was impossible for Idun and Freya to think about taking the lives of people that were living a good life just to test the results of something they weren't certain about. They were too soft to do that.

Odin organized his thoughts.

He concentrated again on the current objective and opened his mouth.

“But our adversary is the black, venomous dragon, Nidhogg. It's an ancient dragon that accompanied the beginning of the World Tree. Even if you have the power of your saga, it won't be that easy.”

“But we still have some possibilities. Right, Tae Ho?”

Tae Ho nodded with a bright expression as Cuchulainn spoke energetically. It was rather better to perceive something as positively as possible when they were going to do it anyway.

Odin put on a faint smile.

“How reliable. And the words of Cuchulainn are right. In the first place, I brought out the name of Nidhogg without taking into account the saga Idun's warrior has.”

“Is there an excellent plan to suppress it?”

“I don't know if it's excellent, but I have a way. Look at this.”

Odin rolled his fingers and drew a rune at Cuchulainn's question, and then, a clear image of a dragon appeared in front of Cuchulainn and Tae Ho.

“The black dragon, Nidhogg.....It has also been a few hundred years since I last saw it, so it may have gotten bigger in that time, but I made this hologram with what I saw the last time.”

It was a black and huge dragon.

There were four legs attached to its long, snake-like body and four pair of wings protruding from its back that were each covered

with sharp stakes.

The notion that within its skull were sported a strong jaw and sharp teeth that wouldn't fall behind to the world wolf's was heinous enough. The glitter of its eyes resembled fire and made one fall into the essence of fear. The four horns that sprouted from its head seemed capable of piercing the enemy in front of it at any instant.

It's entire body was being covered by green fog, but this wasn't smoke. It was a terrible poison that made even the roots of the World Tree rot.

Cuchulainn gulped after looking at the strong enemy that made him hold his breath by its own and asked,

“How big is it?”

It was normal for dragons to be tens of meters long in the case of Asgard and Erin.

Fafnir, that was one of the most famous evil dragons in Asgard, measured a hundred meters.

But they were talking about Nidhogg. He thought that it may reach two hundred meters as it was an ancient dragon.

He asked while thinking like that.

Odin smiled bitterly at Cuchulainn's question and answered with a calm tone,

“If we used the system in the world Idun's warrior used, from it's head to the tip of its tail, it would amount to a little more than 2 kilometers in length.”

Cuchulainn couldn't understand Odin's words instantly. Instead, the one that was shocked was Tae Ho.

Saying that it was more than 2 kilometers long meant that its head alone was a hundred meters in size.

“In-Indeed. It's a size worthy of an ancient dragon.”

Cuchulainn understood Odin's words a bit later and spoke the calmest he could, but he couldn't completely hide his trembling. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that it was a moving city if it was 2 kilometers long.

Odin said once again,

“Right. You could say that its size is our chance of victory.”

It was a thing that was hard to understand, but Tae Ho nodded and said,

“If we just get on its back....”

“That's right. It won't be able to attack its enemy directly because of its size.”

Because for it, Tae Ho's group would merely be like small insects. It wouldn't be excessive to say that they weren't even that visible for the dragon.

“But of course, it's not that there won't be any dangers. You could say that Nidhogg is a city by itself, and there's a probability that there may be small and big demons upon its back. And we also can't ignore the poison emanated from its body, either.”

Tae Ho thought of one of the several dungeons he had conquered in Dark Age. One of them was staged on the back of a really huge monster.

Odin moved his fingers once again, and the part of Nidhogg's chest was amplified with a cross-section view appearing.

“The place we will aim for is its heart room that is hidden in the deepest part of its body.”

As Nidhogg was insanely massive in scale, the heart room was also tens of meters big.

“Inside the heart room is the real body of the dragon.....you could say that it is its essence. If you suppress that essence, you will be able to control all of Nidhogg. I thought that it would resist to your

words after it got suppressed, but the story changes with your saga. You can just control it after suppressing it.”

The situation was different to Adenmaha, who had already had an owner and wanted to get away from them.

He would have to suppress it like he did with Rolo and McLaren and then use his saga.

‘So I will weaken it and then throw a monster ball.’

Tae Ho understood it in a game-like way and nodded. Cuchulainn, who was next to him, asked again,

“Odin, are you able to move?”

“I will speak honestly. It seems like I won’t be able to infiltrate Nidhogg with you. My external injuries are too severe to do that.”

There were several holes in the body of Odin. They were all the tooth marks of the World Wolf.

If it was a normal God of Asgard instead of Odin, they would have died on the spot. Actually, it was marvelous enough that they were sharing a conversation like this.

Tae Ho took out a piece of a golden apple Idun had given him, but Odin shook his head. In the first place, Odin also had a golden apple, but regardless of that, the reason his injuries weren’t able to heal was because they weren’t normal, they had originated from the teeth of the World Wolf.

The World Wolf was Odin’s natural enemy. It wasn’t excessive to say that it was Odin’s end, a creature that was connected with Odin’s fate.

Because of that, it wasn’t easy to recover from a wound given by it.

“But it’s not that I am not able to do anything. I will give strong rune magic and blessings to you.”

“Leave it to me.”

He couldn't say anything aside of that in this situation, and Tae Ho was really planning to work with all his strength. He had been suppressing it from before, but he was really worried about Heda. The look of Idun sitting down while clenching her chest passed through his head.

"I'm grateful that you speak like that."

Odin answered while forcing a smile and then erased the image of Nidhogg. He waited for the roar that was heard from far away to subside and spoke to Tae Ho.

"Idun's warrior, you should rest for now. It is a bit sensitive because infiltrators appeared, but night will come soon. I think that it will be good to infiltrate it after it goes to sleep."

Although they were in the root of the World Tree that was covered with fog and that seemed like it wouldn't have night and day, the flow of time still existed.

"Idun's warrior, and Prince of Light-"

Odin looked at the two of them once again and spoke when they turned to look at him.

"You don't have to worry too much about Idun and Scathach. This may sound a bit irresponsible, but.....there's still Freya and Heimdall in Asgard. It won't break down that easily. I believe that is the case."

"I also think the same."

Tae Ho answered immediately. It wasn't only Freya that remained. There was also the God of Thunder left.

In addition, Loki would also assist them, so Asgard won't collapse easily just like Odin had said.

"You should rest now. I will wake you up when night comes."

Odin spoke and closed his eyes first. Tae Ho expressed etiquette and then laid down on the place he had previously been

unconscious upon.

‘Heda.....’

And Idun.

Tae Ho thought of the faces of the two people and closed his eyes. He then fell in a deep sleep like a lie.

And while Odin and Tae Ho were asleep, Cuchulainn, who’d been left alone, frowned and mumbled,

“So is it a male or a female?”

The black dragon, Nidhogg.

Cuchulainn turned to look in the direction the roar was heard from.

< Episode 37 – The one that conquers (2) > End

Episode 37/Chapter 3: The one that conquers (3)

Tae Ho dreamed.

He fell so deep into sleep that he couldn't even notice it was a dream but instead felt something of which only traces remained that he couldn't remember properly.

“Tae Ho.”

A call reached his ears. Tae Ho slowly extended his head out of his dream. A voice was heard once again when he opened his eyes with difficulty.

“Hello once again?”

It was a speech that was nice to hear whenever he heard it and even more so in this moment, but Tae Ho frowned.

“What? I worked hard to try to imitate her.”

Cuchulainn moved his head closer to Tae Ho and said, but Tae Ho still spoke while frowning.

“You should have saved that.”

“I couldn't do that as I am too gentle.”

Spitting in a smiling face.

Cuchulainn patted Tae Ho's shoulder and then urged him to wake up once more. When Tae Ho gulped dry saliva and rose up, another voice was heard.

“Did you wake up?”

“I did.”

It was the call of Odin. Tae Ho stood up and looked in front of him. Odin was looking up the sky while leaning on a root just like he had been before Tae Ho went to sleep.

“Night has come, and it seems like it is darker and colder here.”

It really was cold and dark just like Odin had said. The sky was also pitch black without any stars. The only thing that was lighting this place up was the moss.

Odin turned to look at Tae Ho and said,

“It seems like Nidhogg fell asleep. It seems like it fell deeper in a sleep because it had been excited all day, so that’s good news for us.”

Odin couldn’t even walk properly, but he was still the King of Gods. He could see through Nidhogg’s state just like if it was in front of him.

“Come closer.”

There were about 5 meters between Tae Ho and Odin. It was a distance enough to talk face to face, but Odin told him to get closer.

Odin rolled his fingers when Tae Ho got closer like he ordered him to, and then, a golden apple the size of a fist appeared from his bosom and fell into Tae Ho’s hand.

“You should also have one. This is a golden apple. Eat that and recover your energies as you have starved for a few days.”

The golden apple was too precious just to use it to satiate one’s hunger, but Tae Ho followed Odin’s order without complaining.

The effect of the golden apple filled one with vitality, so it would be of great help against the battle with Nidhogg.

‘It’s just like eating food that boosts your stats before going on a hunt.’

Tae Ho thought of the stamina-recovery food he used to enjoy in Dark Age and put the golden apple in his mouth. As he took a big bite, after he used to only eat it in pieces, the difference was like heaven and earth.

‘C-cool.’

Fortunately, he said that inwardly.

Tae Ho looked at the golden apple dumbfoundedly. He already knew that it was delicious as he had eaten it a few times already, but for the difference to be this big upon taking a big bite.

It wasn't just delicious. One could also say that held the ideal flavor.

“Is it that delicious?”

Cuchulainn asked, but Tae Ho didn't answer him and just ate. Rather than ignoring him, he hadn't heard him as he was too focused on eating.

“I will now engrave several runes in you. Take off your clothes and lower your resistance towards magic.”

It was something he always did when Heda engraved new runes in him. Because of that, Tae Ho took off his clothes with familiar movements and lowered his resistance towards magic.

Odin rolled his fingers in the air and then a completed rune surged up to rest on Tae Ho's solar plexus.

“The first rune will increase your resistance towards poison. It will mix in with other powers well, so if you have another method to resist against poison, use it along with it. No matter how many methods you have to block the poison of Nidhogg, it will always lack.”

If you aim to get on top of Nidhogg, you have to first find a way to circumvent the poison covering its body. Because of that, you could say that this rune is the most important one for this strategy.

“The second and third ones are protective runes. The first one will protect you from physical attacks, and the other one will protect you from magical ones.”

Runes were engraved into Tae Ho's shoulder once again. Odin

didn't stop there and continued to make new runes.

“The fourth and fifth are strengthening runes. They will grant you more speed and strength.”

This time, they formed on Tae Ho's chest.

As Tae Ho took a deep breath to take in the runes, Odin stopped for a moment and waited. He started to move again only when Tae Ho raised his head.

“The sixth and eighth runes are meant to fight against Nidhogg. I will engrave them on both of your hands. The rune in the left has a strong restraining magic, and the one in the right has a capturing magic that has the power to take away the strength of the captured one. If you use it after you take off some of Nidhogg's strength, it will show great effects.”

Each one of them were strong runes. It was a bit sorry to say this to Heda, but it seemed like it would be hard for all of the runes she had engraved together to be able to match even one of Odin's.

‘It's really a full buff.’

But this wasn't all. Odin still had one more rune magic he had prepared.

“Idun's warrior, I heard you have many weapons. Did you decide on which one you will use against Nidhogg?”

“I have a weapon in mind,”

Tae Ho said naturally, and this was an obvious thing.

Because one's tool and hunting method changed depending on their objective.

A water-attributed weapon against a foe that was weak towards water, and an armor that had resistance towards fire against a foe that could attack with fire.

The objective for this tactic was Nidhogg. Now that the objective was clear, the preparations for it could also become more clearer.

[Saga: Warrior's Equipment]

Tae Ho used the 'Warrior's Equipment' on top of the hilt of Caliburn to recreate a weapon he used in Dark Age.

Dragon Vein.

The dragon-exterminating sword that was also known as the End of Dragons.

Just looking at the effectiveness of the weapon objectively, it was certainly inferior to Gallatin or Arondight, but one could say that it was the best weapon Tae Ho currently had if they considered that his opponent was a dragon.

Actually, the dragon knight, Kalsted, had slain 7 dragons with this sword.

Odin opened his only eye sharply when Tae Ho extended Dragon Vein and then said with an admiring voice,

"Indeed, I can feel a strong power of a dragon exterminator from the weapon itself. Although it doesn't even reach the ankles of Sigurd, I think that this will be enough."

You could say that Balmung was the strongest weapon to kill dragons in Asgard as it had drank the blood of several dragons, starting with Fafnir.

Odin nodded a few times and then rolled his fingers once again to create new runes, but this time, he engraved a rune on Dragon Vein instead of Tae Ho's body.

"It's the eighth and last rune I can give you. Can you see the runes engraved in the blade?"

"I can."

There were three completely identical runes engraved in a line upon the long, wide blade of Dragon Vein that held the shape of a claymore.

Odin explained,

“If you call out the activation code, the aura of a dragon killer comparable to Balmung will be unleashed. Although it’s a single use, you will be able to use it three times as there are three runes.”

The activation code was Dragonote. It meant the end of a dragon.

When Tae Ho put away Dragon Vein, Cuchulainn said next to him,

“Indeed, we will be able to do it with this much.”

Using the terms of Dark Age, he had bathed himself with legendary-ranked buffs.

But it wasn’t the end. Odin still had a way to strengthen Tae Ho besides the runes.

“Idun’s warrior, come closer. I will give you a blessing.”

Tae Ho flinched at those words but then followed his will. He stood right in front of Tae Ho and then lowered his posture.

Odin then ordered Tae Ho to get a bit closer. As Tae Ho got closer while hiding his awkwardness, Odin only moved his neck to give a blessing in Tae Ho’s forehead.

“My blessing shall accompany you.”

It was the blessing of the top God. It was something that other warriors of Valhalla would envy him if they saw this, but Tae Ho thought of another thing unconsciously.

‘I’m glad it wasn’t the best blessing.....’

Tae Ho let out a sigh of relief inwardly and stood up and then Odin’s last arrangement activated.

“Follow the butterfly. It will show you the path to Nidhogg.”

When Odin let out a long sigh, a butterfly that emanated white light appeared and started to flutter its wings, and shining powder scattered behind it as if leaving a trace.

Now, all the necessary preparations have finished.

Tae Ho took a breath and then turned to look at Odin.

“I will be going then.”

“Right, I will pray for your victory.”

But it was at that moment that Odin, who was about to leave his last words of blessing, turned to look at Cuchulainn and said,

“Prince of Light, do you have something you want to say?”

“That...mm, actually yes.”

Cuchulainn nodded with a face mixed with worry and then took a step forward and asked with a really serious voice,

“So is Nidhogg a male or a female?”

Tae Ho let out a sigh at Cuchulainn’s question and thought that he really was a stubborn guy.

But Cuchulainn was being serious.

Because of that, Odin just laughed instead of rebuking and said,

“You will know when you see it yourself.”

But in the end, he didn’t give an answer.

Cuchulainn put a face as if he was being too much, but he was talking with Odin here. He couldn’t complain more than that and stepped back.

Tae Ho faced Odin instead of Cuchulainn. He lightly hit his chest twice and expressed etiquette.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

The shining butterfly started to lead the way.

—

It wasn’t excessive to say that the root of the World Tree, Yggdrasil, was so excessively big it looked like a string of mountain ranges.

Tae Ho couldn't distinguish if he was stepping on the land that was at the end of the world or on the root of Yggdrasil.

After a time passed since they started following the shining butterfly, Cuchulainn spoke to Tae Ho.

‘Are you nervous?’

He said it casually, but it was important. In Cuchulainn's eyes, the current Tae Ho wasn't the usual one.

It didn't mean that he was scared. It was that his worry about other people made Tae Ho's movements awkward.

Tae Ho didn't ignore Cuchulainn's words. He lowered his speed a bit and said with a low voice.

“I had a dream.....”

‘A dream?’

Originally, Cuchulainn would have asked if it was an erotic one, but he controlled himself this time. Tae Ho just thought of what he remembered instead of trying to think something he didn't remember well.

“What should I say, Adenmaha worries me the most.”

Whatever the case, Idun and Heda were in Asgard right now, and Ragnar and Merlin would be able to take care of themselves in any dangerous situation.

But it wasn't the case for Adenmaha. She'd gotten left behind between the World Wolf and the Magician King and had a precarious side on her that made one feel uneasy.

‘So in the end, you are saying that she's not reliable?’

“I think it's a bit different with that.”

Adenmaha wasn't powerless. Her own abilities were outstanding, and nowadays, she'd even learned several mystical magic from Scathach.

The reason Tae Ho always called her regardless of the terrain was because she was of help in any kind of region.

But it was different this time. It wasn't a problem to be talking about being powerless or not.

As Tae Ho smacked his lips as if it was hard to explain, Cuchulainn spoke first.

'Don't worry. Adenmaha is a Goddess that's especially strong against bad luck.'

"Strong against bad luck?"

'Huh? Didn't Adenmaha tell you how she became a slave of Bress?'

"I couldn't hear it yet, and it was weird to ask her."

It was impossible that Adenmaha became his slave by her own will, so the probabilities of it being a good memory was low.

'Hm....so shall I tell you?'

"No, I will hear it from her directly."

Adenmaha would tell him some day. Tae Ho didn't ask her until now as he believed that. He didn't want to know of a past Adenmaha hadn't revealed herself through Cuchulainn.

'Right, I also think that is better.'

Cuchulainn smiled and said.

And how more time had passed?

Tae Ho regained his usual calmness, perhaps because he conversed with Cuchulainn, but soon gulped dry saliva at the scene that appeared in front of him. It was because a huge existence was curling down in between the huge roots that were like mountain ranges.

"The black, venomous dragon, Nidhogg....."

It was so huge that, even though they were looking from far

away, it was hard to look all of it.

The fact that an existence that big was alive and could actually move shocked Tae Ho.

‘Indeed, that is an ancient dragon,’

Cuchulainn smirked rather than being afraid and said to Tae Ho.

‘Don’t be afraid. You are able to do it. What we have to take over is the essence of Nidhogg, that will be in the heart room. It’s not that huge body.’

Tae Ho nodded. He took some more breaths and then walked.

Cuchulainn looked at Nidhogg’s body next to Tae Ho and mumbled alone so that Tae Ho wasn’t able to hear him.

‘I can’t know no matter how long I see it.’

He had told him that he would be able to know when he did so.

Tae Ho activated the first rune while Cuchulainn blamed Odin. He then entered the poison that was a dense green.

< Episode 37 – The one that conquers (3) > End

Episode 37/Chapter 4: The one that conquers (4)

[Saga: Warrior's Equipment]

[Gas-Masker Made with the Leather of a Venomous Dragon]

[Purifier Necklace]

Tae Ho utilized his 'Warrior's Equipment' as soon as he entered the poisonous region and made a gas mask and a necklace that purified the poison around him.

'That's a weird-looking mask.'

Dark Age was adopted as a fantasy, but it was still a game in the end. Rather than a perfectly historical design, they chose to insert several modern items that would appear in FPS titles for the fun of the game.

Tae Ho took some breaths after donning the gas mask. Normal gas masks just prevented the poisonous gas from entering, but the one from Dark Age had a purifying effect just like the necklace.

The poisonous gas of Nidhogg was so lethal that it could even kill the Gods of Asgard when inhaled, but after equipping two purifying items and bearing the runes Odin had engraved upon him, Tae Ho wasn't threatened at all.

"Let's go."

Tae Ho hit the gas mask and then pointed at the butterfly that was flying in place with his chin.

As Tae Ho got closer to it, the butterfly started to lead the path once again.

The path to approach Nidhogg was solitary. There was no sound aside of the breath of Nidhogg that was heard in the distance, and the field of vision was narrow because of the poisonous fog.

‘Your footsteps are too loud. No, the surroundings are too quiet. I think that it would be better to walk in the air.’

Cuchulainn advised with a low voice.

The thing Tae Ho was stepping on was like a vague swamp. It was like a muddy ground that grew porous after the rain.

No matter how careful one was, their footsteps still made noise, and it was heard more loudly because the surroundings were too quiet.

Tae Ho agreed to Cuchulainn’s advice and activated his saga to walk on the air. He then increased his speed and closed the distance with Nidhogg.

[Saga: The Charge of the Warrior is like a Storm]

The only difference than usual was that there was no gale nor thunder. The moment Tae Ho stepped onto the air, he tottered like an astronaut that’d arrived in space and took a deep breath unconsciously.

It was because a huge wall had appeared before his eyes suddenly.

‘It’s Nidhogg.’

It wasn’t a wall. It was the skin of the dragon; however, with its irregular scales covered in dirt and rocks rather than living tissue, it looked like a natural terrain.

Tae Ho kicked in the air once again and propelled himself towards the wall –the body of Nidhogg– and hung onto the scale. It seemed like the dragon wouldn’t even notice as the difference in size was more than a thousand times.

‘It won’t even feel that a bug sat on it.’

Tae Ho listened to Cuchulainn’s words and started to climb Nidhogg slowly. There was no way to know where he was hanging on right now.

‘If you came straight from the direction you decided, there’s a

high probability this is its left leg or its side.'

'I think so too.'

Tae Ho answered inwardly and looked at a more distant place. He saw a part of the wall that was split, and it seemed to be its armpit.

'It's troublesome to be attacked while hanging here, so let's hurry. It seems like Nidhogg still hasn't noticed that you have approached it.'

Tae Ho agreed to his words and moved more determinedly and increased his speed. He climbed the wall almost as if he was jumping, but fortunately enough, it seemed that Nidhogg hadn't noticed him.

When Tae Ho successfully climbed the wall, he could know where he was precisely. It was because the poisonous fog only reached Nidhogg's shoulders.

When he checked the surroundings, he guessed that he was at the left shoulder of the dragon.

'It's crazy big. You remember the path to the heart room, right?'

'Yes, I hope it works properly.'

Actually, the shining butterfly was already leading the path, so there was no need to memorize it.

But the reason Cuchulainn still asked was because the path to the heart room wasn't normal.

When Tae Ho first heard of the heart room, he wondered whether he'd have to enter through its mouth or another hole.

But fortunately, there was another path.

'The rocks that protrude from its back are connected to its insides. You can just think of it as a gill of a fish or breathing holes that are in the skin of humans.'

Tae Ho remembered Odin's words and took out the Axe of the

Mad Warrior instead of Dragon Vein. The blade of the axe was the size of a person and was a weapon one could only use if they had superhuman strength, but it was also good for facing big monsters because of its size.

“Mountainous monster, Lukuku.....”

‘Lukuku? What’s that?’

‘It’s the name of a monstrous turtle that is so big it looks like an island.’

It was the name of a raid boss he had caught in Dark Age. The reason Tae Ho thought of the name of the monster was because he thought that the fight on top of Nidhogg would be similar to that.

The monster, Lukuku, that stretched over one kilometer in length had another field in its back. No, a dungeon. Because of that, one had to first defeat the several monsters that were living within its back before being able to defeat Lukuku itself.

As Nidhogg was a monster that was much bigger than Lukuku, it wouldn’t be weird to find a herd of monsters or even tribes.

But it was weird.

Tae Ho, who was checking his surroundings, dropped his axe and frowned.

‘I can’t feel any presence.’

There really was nothing. The only thing he heard was the breath of Nidhogg.

‘Is there really nothing?’

Odin spoke of the probabilities that there would be monsters within its back, but thinking about it, those were just probabilities.

Odin knew about the path going to the heart room, but it was merely information he had heard from Mimir’s head.

Odin had never laid foot upon Nidhogg nor even watched it up

close. He had merely looked at it from far away with his magic.

Because of that, there were plenty of probabilities that Odin's information was wrong.

‘Perhaps, there may be nothing in it.’

There were no enemies.

It was nice to hear it as he was the one infiltrating, but Tae Ho didn't feel comfortable.

‘Let's go.’

Tae Ho spoke in a really low voice and then grabbed Arondight instead of the Axe of the Mad Warrior.

He could advance quickly as there was no one blocking his path. Tae Ho arrived at the rock he had set as his objective not long after. The rock itself moved everytime Nidhogg took a breath, just like the gills of fish, and when he climbed it, he saw that there was a big crack in it.

‘This information should be right, right?’

‘Even if it's wrong, it has several important organs. You won't lose anything if you don't enter its stomach.’

Tae Ho took off the gas mask and then stood in front of the protruding rock. He then threw himself into it the moment it opened up.

The space that was like a crevice got closer when he entered it. No. Precisely speaking, it had merely split into several smaller passages.

Tae Ho threw himself to the passage the butterfly chose and entrusted his body to the inclination as if it was a slide.

[Saga: Warrior's Equipment]

[Leather Cape of a Fire Dragon]

[Ifrit's Kiss]

The inside of Nidhogg was filled with heat, just like a volcano. Because of that, Tae Ho changed the poison resistant equipment to fire resistant ones.

‘Ragnar was right. It’s not a saga but a cheat. A cheat!’

Cuchulainn laughed and said. Tae Ho agreed to it slightly and kept following the butterfly. As Nidhogg was too big, the passages like the blood vessels were also big, and they gave a feeling similar to if one were exploring a cave.

And after some time—

The shining butterfly turned to dust and disappeared. It meant that the guiding had finished.

Tae Ho stopped for a moment and then equipped himself with battling equipment and pulled out Dragon Vein.

The heart room of Nidhogg was tens of meters big. Big and small pipes including blood vessels were connected to it, and it pulsed periodically like a real heart.

Tae Ho stepped on the thickest blood vessel to approach the heart room and then started to climb the wall after he chose which hole he would enter.

Tae Ho lowered his posture when he arrived at a hole that was a bit smaller than Bracky’s height. There was another hole 2 meters further away and a huge space could be seen beyond that.

Tae Ho crawled to the hole and looked inside of it. The shining moss he had seen in the root was filling up the wall and the floor so it was enough of a lighting.

[Nidhogg’s Essence]

A black dragon, something akin to a miniature version of Nidhogg, was lying down on the ground. It seemed to be more than 10 meters long.

Cuchulainn said,

‘Hey, do you know? I can’t seem to know no matter how long I see it for.’

If it was male or female.

Tae Ho asked soundlessly instead of putting a dumbfounded face.

‘Why are you that stubborn?’

‘At first it was just a joke, but Odin kept dodging my answer so I became really curious.’

He could understand a bit how he was feeling, and because of that, Tae Ho answered without pondering.

‘I don’t know either.’

[Nidhogg’s Essence]

[Female]

‘Really?’

‘Really.’

Tae Ho, who’d answered calmly, ignored the groan of Cuchulainn that was struggling in a haunted fashion and looked at his surroundings. As it was a wide and open land, it seemed like he wouldn’t be able to use the terrain to his favor.

‘Although it is wide, it’s not to the point that a monster that big can fly freely. It will probably turn into a ground battle.’

Although the same couldn’t be said about other moments, Cuchulainn became serious when advising about a battle. Tae Ho checked the essence of Nidhogg with the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’ to grasp its weakness and structure of body and stood up. He then entered the hole.

And at that moment—

The essence of Nidhogg opened its eyes. It wasn’t because it’d heard Tae Ho’s footsteps. As the heart room itself was its magical region, he had sensed Tae Ho’s existence.

Tae Ho also looked at Nidhogg before he executed his envisioned surprise attack without regret.

[Saga: The Charge of a Warrior is like a Storm]

Tae Ho kicked the air. He generated thunder and gales and charged towards Nidhogg.

Nidhogg flinched after it rose up and then roared and kicked the ground. It also sped towards Tae Ho.

It was fast. It had only kicked the ground, but it surged towards the sky like a lightning that had transcended time.

Tae Ho didn't take away his eyes off Nidhogg. He faced it head on and kicked the air once again. He moved a step away from its path and swung Dragon Vein.

The sword bounced away from its scales. Tae Ho kept stepping on the air and landed on the ground, and Nidhogg hit its head on the ceiling. Tae Ho breathed out while the entire room shook. He controlled the gale and thunder he had gathered with the 'Charge of the Warrior'. He then stepped aside and fired lightning towards the ceiling.

The essence of Nidhogg clashed head on against the lightning. It had tried to fly towards Tae Ho the moment it had landed on the ground. The dragon screamed in pain as it was covered by lightning and then spread its wings wide.

Tae Ho looked at the dragon. It was certainly a dignified dragon. He could feel a great strength from the stroke of its wing that tore off the lightning.

But Tae Ho put on a bewildered expression.

It wasn't because he'd discovered something new with his 'Eyes of the Dragon'.

Tae Ho became certain of it in merely two clashes, for the insight of Scathach's style technique had told Tae Ho as much.

It was the same for Cuchulainn, and because of that, the two of them said almost at the same time.

‘This guy-’

‘This bastard-’

The essence of Nidhogg charged towards Tae Ho once again. It was a really simple one that seemed stupid.

Tae Ho moved his body lightly and dodged the attack. He charged towards its open spot and confirmed his theory alongside Cuchulainn.

‘-can’t fight at all!’

That was the case.

And thinking about it, it was something obvious.

The black, venomous dragon Nidhogg—

It had never fought once since it was born.

< Episode 37 – The one that conquers (4) > End

Episode 37/Chapter 5: The one that conquers (5)

One needed an adversary in a fight.

The concept of fighting couldn't be established alone.

In addition, Nidhogg didn't only have an opponent to fight.

'Completely alone. That's its weakness.'

Nidhogg had never received an attack.

There was no one that'd attacked Nidhogg in the root, and even less someone that'd hit it.

Because of that, Nidhogg had never felt threatened by anything.

And there was no one there to teach it how to fight.

The offspring of predators learnt how to hunt from their mother. They learned many things by watching how the animals near them fought, hunted, and escaped.

But Nidhogg didn't even have that process.

Rather than being taught, it didn't even have something to see.

'Perhaps, it may not have moved much.'

Because there was no need to.

In addition, the dragon was too big. Moving a body that big without any reason wouldn't be easy at all.

But of course, the essence that was in the heart room was a bit different, but the fact that it didn't have a reason to move was the same.

No matter how outstanding one was and how much of a shining jewel they were, before they polished their skill, they were merely a rock.

'That's good.....no, it is enjoying it, right?'

It was howling while flying in the air, but it seemed to be having fun.

‘It doesn’t seem like it’s a perverted masochist that likes to get beaten.....well, that may be the case, but anyways, is it that?’

It wouldn’t have had the opportunity to interact with someone else like this.

This moment may be a fun one for it, as if it was playing.

Tae Ho moved the moment Cuchulainn spoke. Whatever the case, he wasn’t planning on playing with it.

‘Let’s restrain it first!’

It was true that Nidhogg was alone.

Honestly speaking, it was a poor.....no, an eternal life of solitude.

However, Tae Ho didn’t get careless. Even if the situation had made it into a sorry figure, there was no guarantee that it was good by nature.

The situation and nature were two different things.

He would first use its weakness, and as it was called an ancient dragon, it would be able to grow stronger while learning during the fight against Tae Ho with its incredible talent. That’s why he had to suppress it now that it was struggling.

‘Sly bastard.’

The moment Cuchulainn shook his head and said some words, Tae Ho threw a flashbang Merlin had made to the opposite side.

Nidhogg turned to look at the flashbang as if it was an obvious thing and was enveloped by a light so strong that it covered the entire room. It seemed like it had gotten quite surprised, for the dragon that was standing on its two feet was about to fall.

Tae Ho closed his eyes for a moment to dodge the light and then clambered atop the tail of Nidhogg and got on its back.

He threw another flashbang once again and put back Dragon Vein.

Chpat!

The flashbang exploded, and Nidhogg struggled while being covered by light once again. It was shouting something, but as this was its first blinding experience, it grew scared in addition to its bewilderment.

‘Wow....you are completely twisting the wrist of a kid. Cruel bastard.’

Instead of rebuking that there was no kid this strong and big, Tae Ho threw a tear bomb this time. It wasn’t even easy to be hanging on it as Nidhogg was struggling fiercely.

[Saga: Warrior’s Equipment]

[Dragon-Slayer Series 09 : Earthquaker]

A black gauntlet made with the leather and bones of a black dragon covered Tae Ho’s hand and arm. The red and yellow lines engraved in the gauntlet made it look like lava flowing down from a volcano.

“Kyaak!”

Nidhogg inhaled all of the tear bomb and coughed. It was an object that could make huge monsters collapse, but it seemed like it just made its nose and mouth itch a bit.

Tae Ho set up the time to throw flashbangs, tear bombs, smell bombs, that could stimulate its sight and sense of smell and threw it in intervals.

The bombs exploded in consecution and took the attention of Nidhogg completely, and Tae Ho, who’d gotten ahold of a scale with his left hand, started to hit its neck with his right arm.

Kang! Kang! Kang!

The sound of hitting metal was heard instead of scales. Nidhogg

just focused in the bombs rather than on Tae Ho as if the latter had no particular effect.

But Tae Ho didn't mind. Originally, one needed patience while accumulating damage. Just like there was the saying that there was no tree that wouldn't collapse after hitting it with one's axe ten times, if one hit the same spot repeatedly, they would see some hope.

Tae Ho's attacks were short and fast. When five of the six bombs went off, Tae Ho's attacks had already reached a dozen in number.

And they finally had some effect. The scale he had hit started to dangle in tatters, and Tae Ho tore it off roughly.

“Kyak!”

Nidhogg screamed. It concentrated completely on Tae Ho even though it was coughing because of the tear bomb.

‘This is also a first for it.’

The experience of having a scale torn off. The pain that followed that.

Nidhogg fluttered its wing as if it wouldn't leave Tae Ho alone anymore. It seemed like it had some basic thought, and it twisted its body roughly in the air.

But even so, Tae Ho wouldn't fall just because of that. He struck with his fist towards Nidhogg's bare skin beneath the torn scale.

“Kyaaak!”

Nidhogg went crazy and slammed the wall of the room with its body.

But it was still immature. It was hard to slam the wall while floating in the air. It was impossible to shake off Tae Ho with the shock created by slamming the wall. In the first place, Tae Ho would have already collapsed if he was someone to fall with just that.

Tae Ho punched a few more times in the place the scale got torn off and then waited for a moment. Nidhogg grew a bit calmer as if it'd relaxed because the pain had subsided, or perhaps it was merely exhausted.

This was the best moment.

[Saga: Warrior's Equipment]

[Dragon Vein]

“Dragonote!”

Tae Ho yelled the activation code when he grabbed the sword, and a red aura started to surge from the blade of Dragon Vein.

Tae Ho stabbed the sword into the neck of Nidhogg without hesitating at all, and at that moment, Nidhogg curled down. It then let out an overwhelming roar.

“Kyyyyyyaaaaak!”

The cry wasn't only heard in the heart room. It's original body also screamed. The entire room shook as if it was being swept by an earthquake.

But Tae Ho didn't stop there. He twisted Dragon Vein. He opened the wound of Nidhogg even more and gave it a more terrible pain.

Nidhogg howled as if it was going to die. It didn't even struggle now and collapsed on the ground.

It wasn't because of the power of Dragon Vein.

Nidhogg took a sword for the first time in its life. A pain that couldn't be compared to having a scale tore off had paralyzed its head.

‘It has no resistance towards pain.’

It was like Cuchulainn had said. Nidhogg was weak against pain. Too weak, at that.

If Nidhogg knew how to fight a bit more, if it knew how to use its

physical capabilities, this kind of situation wouldn't have happened at all.

It would have shaken off Tae Ho and fought a battle that was favorable to it. This place was none other than Nidhogg's magical region.

But it was all meaningless. Tae Ho knew of Nidhogg's weakness and didn't let that go. He rather entered more stubbornly.

“Dragonote!”

Tae Ho yelled once again and a red aura then emanated from Dragon Vein. It spread the aura of a dragon massacrer throughout its body.

The essence of Nidhogg screamed and its original body trembled in pain.

‘An ancient dragon indeed.’

It didn't show signs of dying even though it'd gotten hit directly by two dragon-massacring runes Odin had made directly. It only cried for a moment as if was too weak towards pain, but it didn't seem like the actual damage was big.

But it was enough with this.

Because the fact that it was crying like it would die at any moment was more important and the actual damage was secondary. Nidhogg's consciousness was caught in pain and fear right now.

In other words, it meant that it's will had been bent.

Tae Ho took a deep breath. He grabbed Dragon Vein tightly, which was embedded deeply within Nidhogg's neck and moved his left hand.

[Saga: The Hammer of the Blacksmith doesn't Slip Off]

[The Shining Snare of the Hunter]

[The Comfy Saddle of the Beast]

[Suppressing Reins that are Filled with the Love of Idun]

The rope filled with Ullr's power swirled around Nidhogg's neck. Tae Ho got on the beast's saddle and wore Nidhogg with the rein filled with Idun's power.

All the preparations were taken. The only thing left now was suppressing it.

[Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

Tae Ho entered Nidhogg's consciousness. At that moment, the dragon trembled for a moment and let out a strange cry.

Tae Ho frowned. It didn't work well. The wall surrounding its consciousness was too thick.

“Dragonote!”

Because of that, Tae Ho activated the last rune magic. Nidhogg struggled in pain once again.

[Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

Tae Ho activated his saga one more time and closed his eyes and focused. He pushed himself to a deep part of Nidhogg's consciousness.

Tae Ho opened his eyes. The entire place was dark. It seemed like nothing existed in the world that was pitch black.

But Tae Ho still took a step. It was because he heard a sobbing sound from far away.

It wasn't easy. His steps were heavy. It felt like he was walking in a swamp.

In addition, the difficulty wasn't only in the floor. Harsh waves advanced from the sides that seemed to only be emptiness. It was a strength that could crush Tae Ho to death at any moment.

Tae Ho was inside the consciousness of Nidhogg, who had lived

for a long time along with the World Tree.

It was simple and simpler. It was dyed with only one emotion.

Loneliness.

Nidhogg's consciousness said, but it wasn't speaking to Tae Ho. That was the word it had spoken for thousands of years.

Nidhogg had been alone since the world had started. Ratatoskr appeared at times, but it didn't come down next to it. It just looked at it from far away, and in addition, it didn't even listen to Nidhogg's words. It only mocked and ridiculed Nidhogg with bad words and disappeared.

Nidhogg hated Ratatoskr, but it still waited for Ratatoskr to visit it.

Because he was still the only one that came to talk to it.

If even Ratatoskr disappeared, it would really be completely alone.

The 'One that Controls Dragons' was a saga that connected Tae Ho's consciousness to the dragon.

Because of that, Tae Ho couldn't breathe properly when facing Nidhogg's consciousness head on. He felt like he would suffocate at the overwhelming loneliness.

But he still had to endure. He needed Nidhogg's strength to get out from the roots.

Tae Ho poured the power of a God into his saga and then walked forward. A bigger wave of loneliness came crashing towards Tae Ho. The shape of Nidhogg that was seen from far away had the appearance of a woman.

Tae Ho gritted his teeth and kept walking.

As he walked, a bigger wave came and crushed down like a lie upon him. It advanced with the intent to wholly eradicate Tae Ho.

I'm lonely.

It had always been alone since the world had started.

Lonely.

It had been trapped in the roots, alone.

Painful.

It didn't want to be alone. It wanted to catch Ratatoskr that always left it alone.

But it couldn't do so. The only thing it could do was growl in the roots to signify its own existence, hear the sounds that resounded from the far distance at times, and imagine the outside world.

Nidhogg's consciousness was too heavy.

Tae Ho couldn't say sweet words like he would become its friend, or that it wasn't alone anymore.

The insight of Scathach's style told him that.

He wouldn't be able to overcome this situation with soft words and interaction. He had to forcefully break Nidhogg's consciousness and reach it, that was curling down to protect itself.

Tae Ho struck out with Idun's power and strengthened the controlling rate of the 'One that Controls Dragons'. He didn't stop there and even used Odin's power.

The shadow that was pressing down on Tae Ho started to break, and Tae Ho advanced and opened his mouth. He added another strength on top of Idun's and Odin's.

Bragi's rune.

The God of Music and Poetry.

The God of the saga that sings legends!

Nidhogg looked at Tae Ho. It had the appearance of a mature and beautiful woman that had black hair, but the expression on her face was that of a child.

Tae Ho approached her and amplified the power of his saga with the power of a God. After much effort, he succeeded and created a stronger saga with Bragi's rune.

[Myth-Ranked Saga]

[The One that Controls Dragons]

That strength would reach the ancient dragon!

The darkness surrounding Tae Ho broke down completely, and a powerful, controlling power grasped Nidhogg.

Nidhogg turned to look at Tae Ho with surprised eyes, and Tae Ho grabbed her hand.

And that was the limit. Tae Ho couldn't move anymore.

But it was enough. Nidhogg turned to look at Tae Ho that had grabbed her hands. She opened her eyes widely and then smiled brightly while dissipating all of her resistance that had surged up naturally. She then received Tae Ho's power completely.

'The One that Controls Dragons'.

Tae Ho opened his eyes.

The essence of Nidhogg turned its head and looked at Tae Ho that was riding on it.

[Ancient Dragon]

[Black Venomous Dragon Nidhogg]

Green words.

The essence of Nidhogg lowered its posture and expressed etiquette towards Tae Ho in a sloppy way.

< Episode 37 – The one that conquers (5) > End

Episode 38/Chapter 1: Ratatoskr (1)

There were three beasts living in the World Tree, Yggdrasil.

The black dragon, Nidhogg, that lives in the roots.

The white and huge King of Birds, Hraesvelgr, that lives in the highest roots.

The only existence that can freely come and go between the highest roots and the roots, Ratatoskr.

The oldest one among the three was Nidhogg, that has shared its beginning with Yggdrasil.

The oldest dragon.

The dragon that started with the world.

That was why people called it the ancient dragon.

—

‘Hey, are you fine?’

It was after he checked the green words above Nidhogg’s head. Tae Ho blinked at the urgent voice that rang in his head.

“Cuchulainn?”

‘What is that tranquil look? Do you know how long you have been passed out?’

Cuchulainn spoke as if it was absurd.

Tae Ho blinked a few more times and finally got a hold of himself. Time seemed to have continued unabated for Tae Ho, but he suddenly began to feel like quite a long period had actually passed.

“How long was I sleeping for?”

‘Almost nine days. Do you know how worried I was? The one that was suppressing the dragon collapsed suddenly and shows no

movement for nine days.'

Nine days.

Tae Ho gulped dry saliva and then he could understand.

'So that was the case indeed.'

His memories started to pop little by little. The meeting Tae Ho had with Nidhogg wasn't short.

Tae Ho could connect his consciousness with dragons with the 'One that Controls Dragons', and he got to control Nidhogg from within its consciousness. Precisely speaking, he made it into an ally through communication.

Tae Ho had grown familiar with Nidhogg's life, although his efforts were just the tip of the iceberg. He could feel the loneliness she had been living in directly through the connection.

And this kind of interaction wasn't normal at all.

'How did it turn out? It seems like it went well.'

Cuchulainn, who was stating how worried he was, asked with a voice mixed with expectation and worry. Tae Ho turned his head and answered while looking at the green words above Nidhogg.

"Yes, somehow."

'What happened? Speak in more detail.'

"So....."

Tae Ho paused for a moment and then started to explain the more detailed possible.

Cuchulainn heard everything and said with a sigh.

'In other words, you entered the house of a guy that was always trapped in it; you beat the hell out of it to cut off its will and forcefully made it into your slave? You really are trash, huh?'

"Hey, I didn't say it like that!"

If you lined up the cases that happened in a different way, it was indeed right, but Tae Ho felt it to be unfair.

If a chain procedures hadn't existed, it would have been impossible to enter through Nidhogg's solid consciousness.

Cuchulainn laughed and then said with another tone,

'It's a poor guy, anyways. For the loneliness to have suppressed the pain. How poor.'

Nidhogg had certainly received a great shock for the first time in its life.

But it wasn't comparable to the loneliness it had accumulated for thousands of years.

Cuchulainn thought of Nidhogg that seemed to be enjoying the moment when it first clashed against Tae Ho.

It was only Cuchulainn's guess, but perhaps it may have felt a bit of joy inside the pain it suffered from Tae Ho. Looking at it broadly, it was also a direct interaction with another being.

'Is it because its an ancient dragon?'

Cuchulainn admired the strength of Nidhogg while thinking.

Regardless of being hit three times by the dragon-massacrer rune Odin had made personally, there didn't seem to be any danger to its life.

Not only that, it expressed its loneliness first when it'd faced Tae Ho instead of pain.

Just like Cuchulainn had said, the loneliness had suppressed its pain.

You could think of it in two ways.

The loneliness was so overbearing that it took the terrible pain as a moment of loneliness or was so strong that it could take Tae Ho's attacks.

‘Whatever it is.....it’s poor but amazing at the same time.’

It would probably be both the two cases.

“Perhaps.....It would have been better to try to converse with it.”

Tae Ho had felt Nidhogg’s loneliness directly, different from Cuchulainn.

He couldn’t not feel ashamed from his actions.

But Cuchulainn spoke bluntly.

‘No, your judgement wasn’t wrong. Not even Odin knew what temperament Nidhogg had, and how it was feeling. I’m not saying that the process doesn’t matter as the results are good, but you acted rationally. Just like you said, you were able to enter through Nidhogg’s flaw because there was a process for it. Remember. We...or at least Odin, must return to Asgard.’

There was a moral that had to be accomplished.

Even in this moment, the giants and evil spirits would be stepping on Asgard and Midgard.

Tae Ho nodded heavily.

But it was at that moment. Nidhogg’s essence, that was lying down while Tae Ho and Cuchulainn spoke, twitched and its head split.

Cuchulainn yelled.

‘Huk! So it was a female! I knew it would be like this!’

The thing that appeared from the head of the essence of Nidhogg was a woman with long hair that Tae Ho had seen in its consciousness.

The woman, that could be said to be the essence of the essence of Nidhogg, turned around dangerously and smiled brightly when she saw Tae Ho.

“Tae Ho, master.”

The woman, who was wearing a cloth that seemed like a blanket instead of clothes, approached Tae Ho with quick steps, but she stopped at about ten feet and hesitated on approaching anymore.

Tae Ho understood why Nidhogg was acting like that. Because of that, he spread his arms open and nodded, and Nidhogg grew relieved only then and ran towards him.

It was the first time Nidhogg had hugged someone. She pulled Tae Ho with sloppy movements and stuck her cheek to his chest.

Nidhogg's heart beat quickly. It seemed like she couldn't control herself because she was too excited.

Tae Ho hesitated for a moment but then decided to stroke her head. When he patted her back slightly, Nidhogg rubbed her cheek and said, “Keep touching me. Keep stroking me.”

Those were childish words. Tae Ho felt compassionate and embraced Nidhogg a bit softer, and she closed her eyes and mumbled.

“It's warm. I feel good.”

It was also the first time she felt the heat of another being.

‘You trash-like bastard.’

Cuchulainn said. Tae Ho became bewildered at the sudden remark and blinked.

‘No, why?’

‘Just so. You are trash from now on. You don't need any other reasons! No, I thought of something. To attack this beautiful and good kid in such a cruel way! You really are trash. From now on, you are Idun's trash, so take that into account.’

‘You just said that I was being rational!’

‘Back then, I didn't know it was a cute, sexy, and beautiful beauty

like this! I just thought that it was a big guy!’

Cuchulainn spoke words that were more trash than anyone in a shameless manner and then clicked his tongue.

‘But anyways, my eyes opened up at a new charm. Her voice and her looks are that of a beautiful woman, but her actions and words are so childish....ahh, this is a good thing.’

‘Instead of Prince of Light, aren’t you the Perverted Prince or the Lecherous Prince?’

As Tae Ho spoke as if it was absurd, Cuchulainn snorted.

‘Hmph, how can someone like you understand my aesthetics? But anyways, it seems like it ended up well. Let’s return then. Odin will be waiting.’

There was a high probability that he would think that Tae Ho had failed as nine days had passed already.

Tae Ho agreed to his words and then lightly patted on Nidhogg’s shoulders, that was still rubbing her cheek and playing affectionately.

“Nidhogg.”

“Huh? Yes, yes. Why?”

Nidhogg spoke with a really happy face. Because of that, Tae Ho could speak only after a moment of hesitation.

“There’s somewhere I have to go. I will return soon so can you wait for a moment?”

At that moment Nidhogg’s face stiffened and her white face paled even more.

It seemed like the face of a person that had heard that the world was ending.

“Te-Ten days.....n-no, more than that....I can wait for a hundred nights. Yes, yes. No, I can wait for even more. So just

return, okay? It's a promise, yes?"

Nidhogg stuttered with a voice that sounded as if she would cry at any moment.

And Tae Ho could think of the reason why she mentioned ten and a hundred nights.

One of the several interactions they had shared the past nine days. A case of the past that had become a big wound for Nidhogg.

Ratatoskr, that was the only other being Nidhogg knew, enjoyed ridiculing and bothering Nidhogg with words.

Ratatoskr knew what kind of existence it was to Nidhogg.

Nidhogg, that waited for it endlessly even though it only got hurt by its words.

Because of that, Ratatoskr had spoken with Ratatoskr.

'I will return right after ten days. Ten days.'

Nidhogg learnt of the joy of waiting for the promised day at that time.

But Ratatoskr didn't show up even though ten days had passed. Nidhogg thought that she had counted the days wrong and that she was a fool.

And when close to a month had passed, when Nidhogg bursted out crying as she was exhausted of waiting, Ratatoskr appeared once again.

'I said that I would come after ten days, but you really are a fool as you can't even count that. The next time, I will come in a hundred days so count it well, understood?'

Nidhogg said that she would do so.

She waited and expected for the hundredth day and counted the days.

And a hundred days passed once again. Nidhogg waited anxiously

for Ratatoskr to come back, but it didn't show up.

It just looked at Nidhogg being pained by the piled up expectation and disappointment from a far place.

Ratatoskr laughed at that and didn't visit Nidhogg for tens of years.

It only appeared slightly after Nidhogg thought that she became completely alone and that there was something she had wronged and fell in despair.

It once again infringed on Nidhogg.

'That trash.....no, Tae Ho-like squirrel.'

Cuchulainn said that as a joke, but his voice was really cold.

It was because Ratatoskr's actions had touched Cuchulainn's rage. It's actions were really childish, but it was also really cruel.

Tae Ho was the same as Cuchulainn. He pressed down the unpleasant feeling he had towards Ratatoskr and said to Nidhogg, "I will come back the fastest I can."

"Yes, go. I will be waiting for you."

Nidhogg put on a forced smile.

—

Tae Ho didn't turn to look around when he left the heart room. It was because he thought that he wouldn't be able to leave easily when he saw that Nidhogg was standing like a statue and looking at him.

He passed the heart room and got out of Nidhogg's body. He then turned into a hawk and flew towards the place Odin was at.

And after flying for a while, when they reached a place not too far from Odin, Cuchulainn said casually.

'Hey, you know, right?'

He had taken out the context from his sentence, but Tae Ho could

understand what Cuchulainn was talking about.

The words Odin had said.

What they spoke about before going to suppress Nidhogg.

‘Nidhogg can’t leave the roots with its own strength.’

Because of that, it was impossible to climb on it and leave the roots. In the first place, the reason they had suppressed it was to receive help from it to catch Ratatoskr, the only one that could freely move over the World Tree.

Nidhogg wouldn’t be able to accompany them.

They had to leave behind Nidhogg.

Tae Ho didn’t reply to his words, and Cuchulainn also didn’t urge for an answer.

Tae Ho fluttered his wings. He could see the root Odin was sitting at.

< Episode 38 – Ratatoskr (1) > End

Episode 38/Chapter 2: Ratatoskr (2)

“So you succeeded. You have done well. Your merits are really incredible.”

Odin’s words were quite calm as if he already knew that Tae Ho was coming.

‘Well, he’s the King of Gods.’

Even if he didn’t have Hugin and Munin, he was still the King of Gods. He couldn’t see a thousand miles away like Hermod or hear the sound of a sheep’s fur growing, but he had experience and wisdom that no other God was able to catch up to.

Tae Ho wasn’t the only one that showed no signs for nine days.

Nidhogg also didn’t show any kind of reaction. It just remained lying down.

It was also the first time that Odin had come down the root, but he still heard its roars from the lake of Mimir. It never happened that the roar stopped for nine days.

Because of that, Odin didn’t think that Tae Ho failed, and his guess was spot on.

Tae Ho explained briefly how he’d suppressed Nidhogg and its current state.

“It’s a story that’s hard to believe.”

The other things were secondary, but Nidhogg’s nature was really hard to believe because the dragon was an evil one that would bring destruction by emanating its nasty poison across the realms.

“But it’s all true.”

Cuchulainn, who had materialized thanks to Odin’s magic, stepped up.

His insight with the Scathach-style techniques could see through an act or lies at a glance.

Odin stayed silent for a moment instead of agreeing.

Tae Ho, who gazed at Odin, opened his mouth carefully.

“Oh, Odin, there’s something I want to ask.”

“Speak.”

“Is it impossible to bring Nidhogg with us? It will certainly be of help in driving away the giants from Asgard.”

Tae Ho brought a realistic excuse instead of pity.

He was thinking about getting out of the roots, but not everything would be solved by doing so.

They needed a way to suppress the World Wolf and drive away the giants.

You could say that the body of Nidhogg, that spanned 2 kilometers, was an incredible force by itself. The problem was that it didn’t know how to fight at all, but time would solve that.

In addition, Tae Ho had the ‘One that Controls Dragons’. If he controlled its body and fought, he would be able to display a tenth of its incredible battle prowess.

Tae Ho knew well that Odin disliked Nidhogg, but even so, he couldn’t give up on her that easily.

Odin didn’t answer immediately. He kept silent for a while longer and then closed his only eye and said, “I think you are a bit dazzled.”

The opponent was an ancient dragon.

It was one of the several existences that could bring a world to its end.

“You may be looking at this matter with prejudice, but I thought of this with what you told me.”

Odin opened his eye again and looked at Tae Ho fixedly.

“Why did it appear with the shape of a woman?”

A white woman with long black hair that reached her waist.

A mature, beautiful, and poor woman that stimulated Tae Ho's compassion.

“But of course, that may be its real body. An ancient dragon is the same existence as a God, so there's a high probability it was born with the shape of a human like most Gods. But you can also think of it in this way-”

Odin paused for a moment. He spoke about humanoids, giants included, but then he remembered about the existences hoping for the end of the world and said once again, “Just like you have seen its memory, it would have also seen yours. That's why it may have chosen the best shape to pull your compassion and carelessness. Isn't it weird? The fact that an ancient dragon that has lived for thousands of years chose the shape of a woman to appear in front of you.”

Tae Ho flinched. It wasn't because he'd been persuaded by Odin's words. It was because the ill interpretation blocked all words from him.

But if he took a look at it from a step further, Odin's words were quite reasonable.

Tae Ho couldn't answer immediately. It was because he thought only negative words would come out in response.

Odin didn't urge Tae Ho, and Cuchulainn opened his mouth.

“Oh, Odin, can I say something?”

“Speak, Prince of Light.”

“I understand what you are thinking about, and what you said also has some possibilities. But I thought of another thing.”

Odin opened his eye sharply. Cuchulainn looked at Odin fixedly

just like he had done and said, “The reason it chose the shape of a human may be because it saw Tae Ho’s memories and thoughts. Perhaps it may have been an instinctive judgement. What shape would suit the best with Tae Ho. What shape did it have to take to interact with Tae Ho more easily.”

Cuchulainn thought of Nidhogg that was playing affectionately in Tae Ho’s embrace. If Nidhogg hadn’t chosen the shape of a human and stayed in the shape of a dragon, would it have been able to still play affectionately in Tae Ho’s embrace?

“Rather than a dragon, that is many times bigger than a human. It would have been much easier to communicate as a human. In addition, just like you said, it saw Tae Ho’s memories. It must have known well how much this trash.....no, this bastard likes women.”

‘Cuchulainn?!’

He was doing well, but what was he saying suddenly?

As Tae Ho protested inwardly, Cuchulainn rebuked him in the same way.

‘Stay still you bastard. Did I lie? Do you like women or not? Huh? You can’t say no, right?’

It wasn’t a punishment for nothing.

Tae Ho pressed down his boiling rage and unfairness, and Cuchulainn concentrated on the conversation with Odin once again.

“But of course, those are merely probabilities. It’s only a guess. But if I have to say, I think that what you said is also merely a guess. I hope you make a judgement after you see Nidhogg for yourself.”

“Prince of Light, you are really arrogant.”

“Forgive my rudeness.”

Cuchulainn put a faint smile and bowed.

Odin dropped his shoulders.

“Right. You are arrogant, but your words aren’t wrong. Perhaps, I may have become too narrow-minded as I only perceive the world with a single eye.”

Odin wasn’t a perfect existence.

The case with the World Wolf was one example of this.

If they had succeeded in resurrecting the World Wolf, there was no need to hide it. They would have placed it on the battlefield immediately.

He fell in a childish, fixed concept and suffered for it, and the result of it was that he got trapped in the roots.

As Odin twisted his thoughts by his own accord, Cuchulainn revealed a bitter smile. He was happy that his words had worked, but it was painful to see a king without his wings.

“Idun’s warrior, just like you and Cuchulainn had said, I will have to see Nidhogg for myself. We need its help to get out of here anyway.”

His wounds had healed up quite a bit the past nine days, but it was still uncomfortable to move. It was not possible to ride on Tae Ho’s back after he transformed into a hawk.

“Don’t worry about methods for me to move. I will engrave dragon transformation runes, so come closer.”

Tae Ho told Odin to wait for a moment when he made a gesture and used the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him.’

[Fake Heda]

[Fake Ingrid]

As two fake Valkyries appeared in front of Tae Ho, Odin put on a really surprised face. It was because he had seen through the saga Tae Ho possessed at one glance.

“It’s a really impressive saga. The origin is also amazing. I can see how much affection Heda holds for you.”

Because the saga started and was completed by Heda’s meeting.

The fake Valkyries lowered their heads in front of Odin, and Odin engraved a rune in each of their collar bones.

Dragon transformation rune.

As the Valkyries yelled the activation code, the two of them transformed into small dragons of around 5 meters in size.

It seemed like their color took the color of their hair that Heda was a red scaled dragon and Ingrid was a golden one.

Tae Ho helped Odin get on the fake Ingrid and then he got on top of the fake Heda. And then Cuchulainn said casually, ‘Hey, it’s a one-use anyways, so couldn’t you just summon Heda?’

The dragon wasn’t small enough that two people couldn’t get on it.

‘No, but still.’

‘Why? even if it’s fake, only you can ride on it? Huh?’

Cuchulainn laughed and asked. In the first place, it seemed like he had spoken to make fun of him.

‘Let’s go quickly.’

Tae Ho interrupted Cuchulainn’s words and departed.

—

Tae Ho landed the fake Valkyries on the rock that was connected to the heart room.

Originally, he would have needed to walk for a long time to get there, but there was no need to do so this time.

“Tae Ho, master! You really came fast!”

Nidhogg, who was sitting on top of the rock, stood up while her

eyes shone and then started to cry. It was because she was really grateful that Tae Ho had returned in only an hour.

‘Tears of happiness are really beautiful.’

Cuchulainn mumbled proudly and soothed Nidhogg. In the first place, Nidhogg stopped crying as soon as she embraced Tae Ho.

“Indeed,”

Odin, who had seen their exchange, said. It was brief, but there were several emotions mixed in with his voice.

Nidhogg looked at Odin while leaning on Tae Ho’s chest. There was curiousness and fear in her eyes.

Odin could know that reason, and because of that, he said to Nidhogg.

“Come closer.”

Nidhogg flinched at the low call. She just stuck her face closer to Tae Ho and didn’t move closer to Odin.

Because of that, Tae Ho slightly separated her from him and said, “It’s fine. He’s a good person.”

“Ye-yeah.”

Nidhogg groaned a few times but then approached Odin after nodding carefully.

One step, two steps. Nidhogg, who was walking hesitantly, turned to look at Tae Ho and then increased her speed. She stopped right in front of Odin and sat down.

Odin observed her actions. He looked at her black eyes and asked, “Nidhogg, do you know who I am?”

“No but I feel like I do. Scary. You are a scary person.”

Odin’s face wasn’t in Nidhogg’s memories, but she somehow felt a natural familiarity and fear from him.

A person that wasn’t in her memories but felt like she had

certainly met him before.

She was scared. Fearful. It wasn't familiar to her at all.

Nidhogg shrugged her shoulders and turned her head as if evading Odin's eyes.

Odin opened his only eye sharply and thought,

'She's in the middle.'

Between the one wanting to maintain the world and the one hoping for its destruction.

The black dragon, Nidhogg, was born with both of those attributes, and the one that developed more was the one that hoped to maintain the world.

But it was dyed with another color.

If one compared the version wanting to maintain the world with white and the version wanting to destroy it as black, Nidhogg wasn't black, white, nor even gray. It was a mixture of the two.

Half in white, and the other half in black.

She was a dragon that wanted to maintain the world but was leaning towards the one that wanted to destroy it.

'Is this also fate?'

If they had left her alone, Nidhogg would have completely become a being that wanted to destroy the world.

But Tae Ho had appeared.

Just like Odin gave a rank among Gods to Loki and pulled him to the side that wanted to maintain the world, Tae Ho also controlled Nidhogg with the 'One that Controls Dragons' and led her to his side.

"It would have been better if they'd met before."

He never thought that Nidhogg would be in such state.

He ended up hearing the roars from the lake of Mimir and judged it rashly.

It was born an evil dragon. It's roars were filled with rage towards the world.

But that wasn't the case. The roars of Nidhogg weren't filled with rage, but with loneliness.

"I'm sorry."

Odin extended his hand and stroke her head. She pulled her body back reflexively the moment he extended his hand, but then accepted it. She slightly bowed as a puppy being stroked and closed her eyes.

Tae Ho let out a sigh of relief at that sight. He transmitted his words to Odin with mystical magic.

'Odin, pardon my rudeness. Am I able to bring Nidhogg with me?'

The reason he had spoken to him in such a method was to prepare for when it wasn't possible. Because Nidhogg could get hurt with such expectations.

Odin smiled bitterly at his consideration. Idun was one thing, but her warrior was also too soft; however, Odin didn't seem to dislike that softness.

"Just like I said before, it's impossible with our strength."

Nidhogg opened her eyes while wondering what he was speaking about. Tae Ho gulped dry saliva and waited for Odin's next words.

It was because his words were heard differently from before.

Impossible with our strength.

That was a clue. Another being may exist that could help them.

If it only wasn't with their strength.

If someone's help was added.

“Ratatoskr.”

Nidhogg spoke at that moment. She raised her head and stood up.

“Ratatoskr! Ratatoskr is coming!”

Nidhogg said happily. She always got hurt by Ratatoskr, but it still was her only companion to talk with. Even words that ripped her heart were valuable to her.

‘It finally came.’

Cuchulainn said in a cold voice, and Tae Ho also looked up the sky with cold eyes.

He couldn’t see it yet, but it was definitely coming. The sound of footsteps were heard as before.

“There’s no time. Listen to what I say well.”

Odin gathered everyone’s attention and then started to speak.

< Episode 38 – Ratatoskr (2) > End

Episode 38/Chapter 3: Ratatoskr (3)

Ratatoskr ran on top of Yggdrasil with booming sounds.

If Nidhogg was a dragon and Hraesvelgr was an eagle, then Ratatoskr was a squirrel.

But, just as the dragon and eagle weren't normal, Ratatoskr also wasn't the average squirrel either.

Beast Ratatoskr.

The only existence that could freely move in the World Tree.

The squirrel, that had ash-colored fur, was bigger than normal dragons. It was tens of meters long from its tail to its head.

In addition, it wasn't only big. It's leathery hide, which was laced in black lines, was hard as steel, and its fur was as sharp as a blade.

The root Nidhogg was living in was in a really deep place. The lake of Mimir was connected to one of the roots too, but they couldn't be viewed as being the same. If the root Nidhogg lived was the 100th floor, then the lake of Mimir was at the 10th.

Ratatoskr passed the lake of Mimir and went down to a deeper place. It ran while passing the dense fog.

Ratatoskr looked different from normal squirrels, its size aside. It had a long tail that rivaled its body in length and had four legs, but its head and other body parts looked really heinous.

There were sharp stones surging up from its fur. If the stiff fur was like a blade, then the rocks could be compared to huge axes.

But the most peculiar part was its head.

Big, white teeth that could turn hard boulders into dust in an instant were sprouting out. There was a horn erupting from the inside of its nose and two more flanking its head. The one that was in its nose was like that of a rhinoceros, and the ones at the sides of its head were centered so that they made a circle.

It wasn't that weird up to this point because horns were something that common beasts also had.

The thing that made its head truly gastly was that there was the upper body of a woman melded into its forehead.

The lower body of the woman was the head of the beast, just like a centaur, and the upper body of a human.

The woman had violet skin and had hair composed of hundreds of thin, elongated snakes.

Her eyes held no scleras and were completely black, and the tongue of a snake darted out from her mouth.

Just from looking at its shape, one could say that it was rather beautiful, but the feeling it gave was heinous and atrocious, so it also made one feel fear.

Ratatoskr hummed and ran. It's claws left new wounds in the World Tree.

The fog grew denser. Human presence disappeared completely, and nothing was heard aside from the steps of Ratatoskr.

And it finally stopped. It wasn't because it had reached its objective. There was a bit more to go, but it stopped anyways.

The boundary between the root Nidhogg lived in and the one above that lay before it.

The last line that couldn't be crossed if one didn't have permission, so it wouldn't be able to be crossed until Nidhogg's eventual demise.

How would it bother Nidhogg today?

He thought of several methods in an instant. Among them, there was a fresh curse Hraesvelg had made.

But Ratatoskr shook his head. It was because it wanted to go by the traditional way.

“Shall I go then?”

Let’s bully Nidhogg.

Let’s keep berating the poor dragon that was stuck in the roots and make it resent the world. Let’s dye its white heart with black emotions.

More than a thousand years had passed, but the squirrel didn’t grow tired of it. It was rather fun for it.

Because Nidhogg only had Ratatoskr, but it wasn’t the same for Ratatoskr.

It wasn’t talking about Hraesvelgr. Ratatoskr could come and go from the top of the World Tree to the roots however much it wanted, and so harassing Nidhogg was only one of the tasks it had to do.

It was something that brought it joy whenever it was recalled in its memory, so there was no way it would grow tired from doing it.

Ratatoskr giggled and then crossed the line as its determination grew.

It clenched the World Tree with its claws and pushed itself upside down.

Ratatoskr didn’t call for Nidhogg. It was because, even by walking silently like this, that big and fool-like dragon extended its head like a chick waiting for food and waited for it.

And it wasn’t different today. It had merely went down a hundred meters after crossing the line, but the black dragon extended its head beyond the dense fog and poisonous fog.

“Ratatoskr!”

Nidhogg said. It was Nidhogg that always smiled brightly when starting the conversation but always ended up crying.

Ratatoskr laughed. It was because it was glad to see that the heinous dragon that was 2 kilometers long looked at itself and

speak with an anxious voice.

Nidhogg grabbed the World Tree with two of its arms as if it wanted to get closer and pushed its body closer. The scene was overwhelming as it was no different from a mountain scrambling closer, but Ratatoskr didn't mind it much. There was plenty of distance between the two of them.

Ratatoskr stopped in place and started to speak with light curses. It was only saying that Nidhogg was stupid and only big and acted as a kid, but this much was enough for Nidhogg as it wouldn't be able to understand hard curses either way.

And Nidhogg started to sob as it had effect.

“Too much, you are too much! Why are you always like this?”

As the distance between the two of them was still great, they conversed through magic rather than with their voices.

Ratatoskr laughed once more. It was because the sobs of the dragon were still heard as a roar, and it was too laughable.

“That is because you are a retard that doesn't have friends, family, or anything!”

Nidhogg's big body flinched. Nidhogg said in a dispirited voice again,

“But you are my friend.”

“I'm not. Why would I befriend trash like you?”

As Ratatoskr spoke in a cold voice, Nidhogg flinched once again. Then, Ratatoskr slightly pulled back, as it knew that this was the perfect moment to give additional wounds.

“For trash like you to call me a friend, I will have to leave as you have worsened my mood.”

“Do-Don't go!”

Nidhogg knocked its head on the floor and begged. Ratatoskr

smirked at that and then looked down at Nidhogg's face.

"Fine. Then copy what I say. If you do, I will stay for a bit longer."

"Ye-Yeah."

"Nidhogg is trash that is only big, doesn't have any friends, and has a retarded head and doesn't have any right to live. Having been born is a sin of itself."

Nidhogg opened its mouth but couldn't say anything. Ratatoskr laughed once again.

"Why, you can't? I will leave then."

Ratatoskr really turned around and then Nidhogg yelled hurriedly.

"I....I will do it!"

Ratatoskr slightly turned its head and looked down at Nidhogg. Nidhogg sobbed and opened its mouth.

"Ni-Nidhogg is a big.....retard.....stupid....."

"I can't hear you well."

"Trash. Doesn't have rights to live. Having been born is..... a sin....."

Nidhogg's voice became lower and lower, and Ratatoskr's smile became denser in kind.

"I-I'm done. You will stay a bit more, right?"

Nidhogg forced a smile and said. This was the moment Ratatoskr hoped for the most.

"Retard! You really do it because I tell you to do so? I'm leaving!"

Ratatoskr laughed and turned around. He still hadn't transmitted the foul words Hraesvelg had requested be passed to Nidhogg and also couldn't make the dragon spit curses to transmit it to Hraesvelgr, but it could do all this later.

Leaving like this today would be the most effective.

Ahh, what kind of expression would Nidhogg make now that it was left alone? How much would it cry?

Just imagining it was fun, and because of that, Ratatoskr didn't leave Yggdrasil immediately. It pretended to hesitate a moment so that Nidhogg's hopeful attitude would rise again so he could crush it once more.

And it was at that moment—

Nidhogg pushed its body forward, and Ratatoskr laughed once again at that big movement.

“What are you going to do? You can't even fly because of how big you are!”

Ratatoskr turned around to harass Nidhogg. It even got a bit lower as if egging it on.

Just like Odin had predicted after listening to Nidhogg's words.

‘Go.’

Cuchulainn said. At that command, Nidhogg's big body, precisely speaking, its big head, split in two.

The thing that surged up was Nidhogg. It's size, merely 1/20 of its original body, was still a huge, black dragon, and it fluttered its four pair of wings and flew up.

Ratatoskr was stunned at the sudden emergence and tried to turn around, but it couldn't do so. All four of its legs were tied up to the World Tree and didn't move.

It was the effect of the rune magic Odin had engraved. As he had installed it in a hurry, it wasn't able to tie down a beast like Ratatoskr for a long time, but it didn't matter too much. It was enough if it was able to tie the rude squirrel down even for a few seconds.

Nidhogg fluttered its wings once again as Ratatoskr broke the

rune magic, but when it turned around, another magic was activated.

Odin hadn't installed only one rune magic. He had inscribed a line of them along the path he'd guessed that Ratatoskr would approach and leave the border Nidhogg wasn't able to cross.

Ratatoskr's movements stopped again, and Nidhogg flew. The distance between the two grew closer by every passing second.

Finally, Nidhogg's teeth reached Ratatoskr. It bit its tail.

The first plan Odin had come up with was that Nidhogg would drag down Ratatoskr, but Tae Ho's plan was different. Tae Ho, who was riding on Nidhogg's forehead, looked at a place beyond Ratatoskr. He looked at the line that Nidhogg couldn't cross and ordered,

“Fly up!”

Nidhogg fluttered its wings with more strength and charged while still biting Ratatoskr's tail.

Odin had said that it was impossible to cross the line with all of Nidhogg's body.

To cross it, one needed Ratatoskr, the only existence that was allowed to do so.

To fly while biting Ratatoskr one needed overwhelming strength and also speed that could cross that line in an instant.

Ratatoskr shook its body as if struggling. It tried to delay Nidhogg's speed by a little bit.

Nidhogg felt it to be difficult. It felt that it would be impossible to cross the line like this.

But it didn't stop its wings.

It wasn't because of the desire that it wanted to cross the line and get out.

Nidhogg wasn't alone. There was someone granting it strength.

[Odin's Valkyrie]

Odin had given Nidhogg a title of Valkyrie.

The process was a mess as there wasn't even a ceremony, but it was enough.

Because the minimum requirements were caught.

It now needed a new strength to be added!

[Saga: The Warrior that Rides on Valkyries]

[Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

[Saga: The Charge of a Warrior is like a Storm]

Tae Ho's sagas granted further strength to Nidhogg. It enabled Nidhogg, who didn't have much experience in flying, to be able to draw a perfect trajectory.

Nidhogg raised its head and pushed Ratatoskr in the boundary line. It used Ratatoskr as a shield and passed through the invisible barrier!

A sound that was breaking was heard, and Ratatoskr cried out.

Nidhogg's strength was spent as she passed through the barrier, but she still summoned more to fly up again. It stuck its claws onto Yggdrasil and hung on to it desperately.

Nidhogg couldn't do anything anymore. It didn't even have the strength to move now. It couldn't even be happy about the fact that it had crossed the line because of its exhaustion.

Ratatoskr breathed roughly. It couldn't get out from Nidhogg's grasp; however, it could push it back below the line.

But its plan was thwarted. It wasn't because of Odin's rune magic. Obviously enough, Odin's rune magic didn't exist outside the boundary line.

Another one.

A third person besides Nidhogg and Odin.

Cuchulainn didn't make any advices. Tae Ho surged up by kicking Nidhogg's forehead and charged towards Ratatoskr.

“Who are you! Who the hell are you!”

Ratatoskr got angry and asked, but Tae Ho gripped the air instead of answering immediately. He gripped the Hammer of Clash, one of the weapons Merlin had made to face the giants.

“I'm Nidhogg's friend.”

“What?”

Ratatoskr blinked at the late reply, and at that moment, Tae Ho swung his hammer. It clashed against Ratatoskr's head, and a crisp, violent explosion rang out like a thunderclap.

< Episode 38 – Ratatoskr (3) > End

Episode 38/Chapter 4: Ratatoskr (4)

Ratatoskr couldn't understand the current situation.

It did understand that Nidhogg had gotten smaller, for an ancient dragon was an existence far removed from its normal brethren.

Actually, it didn't make sense that it'd maintained a huge body of 2 kilometers in the first place. The reason Nidhogg was able to survive, even when it had that big body, was because Nidhogg's 'original' body was a kind of magic-a magical armor.

The ancient dragon was an existence like a God just as Odin had thought.

Because of that, one could say that the shape of a woman with long black hair was Nidhogg's real body.

The shape of the black dragon was only a magical armor Nidhogg was wearing, so it could change it whenever it wanted.

It could wear a smaller armor instead.

It was doubtful how a stupid girl like Nidhogg could come up with that, but it was possible.

But what happened after that was out of Ratatoskr's comprehension.

Nidhogg had crossed the line. A dragon that hadn't been able to fly properly because of its big body suddenly drew a perfect trajectory as if it had become a master in flying.

The several rune magics that were engraved in Yggdrasil also filled the squirrel with confusion. The ancient dragon, Nidhogg, could use mystical magic as naturally as breathing, but it could only spit some fire or wind. It was a fool that had power but didn't know how to use it.

Rune magic was a really developed magic. From whom did Nidhogg learn it when it had only met Ratatoskr?

The focus point of the things it couldn't understand was the human that'd surged up from atop Nidhogg's forehead.

Who was that human?

How could someone besides Nidhogg be on the roots!

Bang!

A loud sound erupted once again. Ratatoskr, that had its head bent back because it'd been hit by Tae Ho's hammer, was hit once again in its right cheek.

Blood and teeth spurted through the air.

Ratatoskr screamed.

"Die!"

An evil aura burst out like an explosion. But it didn't end there, and the several vipers that were on its head instead of fire flew towards Tae Ho.

Tae Ho acted calmly. The moment he hit Ratatoskr's cheek, he put back the Hammer of Clash and instead grabbed Caliburn. He blocked the evil aura with Camelot's glory and entrusted his body to the shock. He got pushed behind naturally and then swung his sword.

Chkat!

He split the head of the vipers alongside a sharp sound. Ratatoskr screamed once again, and Tae Ho kicked the air. He jumped as if spinning and then swung his sword once more. The Wind Split performed by Caliburn slashed the vipers in one go.

Ratatoskr bent back. It retrieved the vipers and opened its mouth widely towards Tae Ho.

The cry of a snake erupted from its throat, and at that moment, purple poison that seemed like it could melt even gold in an instant was fired towards Tae Ho.

It was an attack that Tae Ho couldn't dodge easily as he could jump in the air but not fly freely. Compared to Nidhogg, Ratatoskr had a little battle experience and spread its poison widely on purpose, so it became hard for Tae Ho to dodge.

But Tae Ho acted calm this time too. He kicked the air once more and then incorporated Scathach's techniques to Kalsted's swordsmanship.

Wind Split.

A curtain of wind arose by following the trajectory of the sword. It didn't only stop Ratatoskr's poison, it led them away with the wind, and it rather poured down at Ratatoskr.

“Kyaaak!”

Ratatoskr screamed in pain and anger when the poison touched its skin. It did have resistance towards poison, but it couldn't do anything about its skin melting and the pain it brought.

Tae Ho stepped back instead of charging and summoned the fake Heda. The fake Heda that appeared below him donned the Flying Horse Wing Coat in an instant and transformed into a white horse.

“Let's go.”

Tae Ho said. The fake Heda became Tae Ho's wings. She flew at an overwhelming speed and charged towards Ratatoskr.

Ratatoskr looked at Tae Ho and the fake Heda even while screaming. It cursed out and unleashed its aura once again.

Petrifying evil eyes.

It was the strong power of a curse that contained Ratatoskr's eyes, but Tae Ho didn't budge even a little. It was because the moment its evil eyes activated, Odin's rune magic, that was engraved in Tae Ho's body, activated at the same time.

Odin was someone that took preparations.

He didn't only wait the past nine days. He had prepared several

runes in case Tae Ho returned victorious.

The curse of the evil eyes clashed with the protection rune. A loud sound as glass breaking was heard.

Tae Ho charged at that moment and swung Caliburn towards Ratatoskr's exposed waist.

"Kuagh!"

Ratatoskr's body was at least 50 meters big, but the wound left behind by Caliburn wasn't shallow at all. The sacred power behind Camelot's glory burned down Ratatoskr's aura, and violet blood surged up like a fountain.

"Nidhogg! Nidhogg! Save me!"

Ratatoskr looked down at Nidhogg that was biting its tail and screamed.

Tae Ho, who was taking a turn in the air with the fake Heda, felt absurd at Ratatoskr's shamelessness, but it didn't stop.

"Save me! Save me! We are friends!"

Nidhogg reacted at the yell that was close to being a sort of abuse. Precisely speaking, it flinched at the last word.

The strength in Nidhogg's jaw grew weaker. It was unavoidable. Ratatoskr was the only one for Nidhogg for a thousand years. No matter if it was good or evil, it was still the only one for it.

But that Ratatoskr was begging it to save it. Was yelling that it was its friend.

Nidhogg felt like crying. It was an emotion that was hard to explain. She disliked the Ratatoskr that only said bad words, but her heart beat at the single word of friend.

Nidhogg opened its mouth and in the end let go of Ratatoskr.

"Stupid bitch!"

Ratatoskr yelled its tail and hit Nidhogg's head. It seemed like it

was planning to push down Nidhogg below the line and escape.

“Nidhogg!”

Tae Ho yelled hurriedly.

Nidhogg stumbled after being hit by Ratatoskr. As it was barely hanging, it couldn't endure it anymore with its own strength.

“Right, with its own strength.”

A strong gravity magic covered Nidhogg's body and stuck her to Yggdrasil. It was done by Odin that was inside of Nidhogg.

Ratatoskr couldn't believe its eyes, and Tae Ho didn't leave it alone anymore.

He charged towards Ratatoskr with the fake Heda like a meteor. When Ratatoskr raised its head, it was too late.

Tae Ho's sword split Ratatoskr's head. It fell down instead of the snakes and screamed,

“Ratatoskr!”

Nidhogg yelled in surprise, but it was different for Tae Ho. It hadn't died yet, although that didn't mean that it was immortal and could live even if its head got cut off.

‘It's real body is a squirrel.’

It was just like Cuchulainn had said. The body of a woman that surged up from its forehead was merely a part of its body. But it didn't mean that it was its essence.

If one used bugs as an example, it was like an antennae.

Tae Ho checked the neck of Ratatoskr with the snakes at the same time and then looked at the head that was below the waist of the human form –Ratatoskr's real body.

“Tch!”

Ratatoskr had pretended to play dead to try to escape, but it hadn't worked. It turned its body around, but Tae Ho was a bit

faster.

The flashbangs Tae Ho threw like shurikens exploded right in front of Ratatoskr, and at that moment, it yelled in fear as its vision was robbed.

Tae Ho pulled out Caladbolg instead of Caliburn. He jumped down from the back of the fake Heda and landed on Ratatoskr's forehead –precisely speaking, on the organ that was shaped like a woman at the part he'd severed.

Although its head had been cut, it was still connected to Ratatoskr.

In addition, it was easier to inflict wounds on it as it didn't have fur or thick, leathery skin covering this part.

Tae Ho slipped off while following the back of the human-shaped form and stabbed Caladbolg into the flesh that connected Ratatoskr and the human. New pain shook Ratatoskr's head and it struggled, but it wasn't enough. Tae Ho pushed the blade even deeper and then released lightning.

A soundless thunder swallowed the squirrel's impending scream.

Ratatoskr couldn't let out a sound, and because of that, Tae Ho expelled lightning once again.

“Kuaagh!”

Ratatoskr couldn't endure it anymore. Hanging onto Yggdrasil was also proving to be hard.

“Save me! Save me! I will do whatever you ask me!”

Ratatoskr begged while bowing its head in an inclination. Tae Ho didn't believe its words one bit but still nodded. This was because he had a method to make it submit whether its words were real or not.

“It's my turn.”

The one that appeared through a hole in Nidhogg's forehead was

Odin.

“Hik?! Odin?! Weren’t you bitten by the World Wolf and killed?!”

Ratatoskr looked at Odin and spoke with a high-pitched voice.

‘Is that indeed the case?’

Cuchulainn exclaimed with a low voice. It had been ten days since he’d gotten caught in the roots with Tae Ho, so it was understandable that those rumors would have circulated. There was a high probability that everyone in Asgard now believed that the two of them were dead.

Tae Ho frowned. He had crossed the line, but he still couldn’t connect with Idun even if he used ‘Idun’s Warrior’, maybe because he was still near that line.

‘Let’s calm down.’

Tae Ho soothed himself with some slow, deep breaths. Now that he had suppressed Ratatoskr, he had to listen to the situation from it.

Odin said to Ratatoskr,

“I will now engrave runes of obedience in you. Don’t resist and take it.”

It was a rune meant to suppress the adversary and make them obey, just like the name implied.

The one that had the runes engraved within them couldn’t disobey the order of the one that had placed them there, and if they did, they would suffer a terrible pain and inevitably die. It was magic no different than a curse.

In addition, the one using this rune magic was none other than the King of Gods and God of Magic, Odin. Ratatoskr felt terrible, but he couldn’t do anything.

Odin began to engrave the runes of obedience one by one.

Eventually, they numbered nine in total, and each of them possessed tremendous magic power.

Ratatoskr completely erased its thoughts about resisting or escaping. It had no other means than living as Odin's slave forever.

Nidhogg looked at that Ratatoskr with depressed eyes.

And after a few minutes passed–

Odin finished engraving all of the runes and stood up. He then gave Ratatoskr its first order.

“Ratatoskr, tell me all that's happened during the past 12 days. What's happened outside of the root?”

Ratatoskr rolled its big eyes before beginning to speak with a sigh.

< Episode 38 – Ratatoskr (4) > End

Episode 38/Chapter 5: Ratatoskr (5)

“So-”

“Wait.”

It was when Ratatoskr was about to start telling the story that Tae Ho raised his hand to interrupt him and then turned to look at Odin and said, “Odin, sorry for my impertinence, but can we move places first?”

The place they were at currently was the side of the World Tree. It had quite an inclination, but one could say that they were hanging on it.

It didn't matter if it was hard for Ratatoskr or not, but the problem was Nidhogg. She had used all her strength on passing the line, so it seemed like it was hard on her to even stay hanging.

Odin understood Tae Ho's words and then nodded while looking at Nidhogg.

“Right, this isn't a comfortable place to have a conversation. Your words are right.”

They had to move places. It was impossible to find a place for Nidhogg to sit or lie down, but Odin didn't mind much. It was because Nidhogg wasn't the only one that had joined their group.

“Ratatoskr. Lead us to the closest cave.”

The squirrel beast, Ratatoskr.

It had several caves in the World Tree. It was a beast that had lived for more than a thousand years, but as it was originally a squirrel, it couldn't throw away its natural habits.

Odin didn't simply order and activated the rune of obedience. Ratatoskr grew anxious at the pain that pressured his head and said hurriedly, “Ah, I understand! I will lead you!”

Ratatoskr moved immediately, and Tae Ho moved from its head

to Nidhogg's head.

“Nidhogg, are you able to move?”

“Yes, I can. Thank you for worrying.”

Nidhogg's voice reached Tae Ho's head directly. Tae Ho lowered his posture and lightly touched Nidhogg's head. Ratatoskr, who was carrying Odin in its forehead, moved with utter haste.

The World Tree that pierced through Asgard, Midgard, and Niflheim was merely a part of the real Yggdrasil, but even that section alone was huge.

When Tae Ho reached the cave after being led by Ratatoskr, he looked at his surroundings with an amazed face. The cave was so big that there was still space remaining after Ratatoskr and the hundred-meter long Nidhogg entered it.

“For there to be a place like this. Amazing.”

Tae Ho exclaimed unconsciously, and Odin said in a low voice, “The roots of the World Tree are really vast. There may even be fairies that make caves like this and live in them.”

“They are also in here?”

Nidhogg's eyes shone at the word ‘fairy’ and threw a question. She had appeared as the shape of a woman, her real essence, possibly because they'd entered a safe place.

Odin looked at Nidhogg with a satisfied look and answered,

“Not here. I will take you to them when we have the opportunity.”

“Re-Really? Thank you. Odin-nim is kind.”

Compared to Ratatoskr, Tae Ho and Odin were kind. As Nidhogg smiled brightly in joy, Odin smiled bitterly. It was because he thought of the misunderstandings he'd had about Nidhogg.

‘There are many things I don't know.’

He had acquired copious amounts of knowledge for nine days by offering one of his eyes in the lake of Mimir, but it's not that he completely understood how this world worked. Odin was actually an incomplete existence.

“Ratatoskr, start speaking.”

Odin ordered Ratatoskr after organizing his thoughts. Ratatoskr gulped dry saliva and opened its mouth.

“It's rumored that the King of Gods was bitten by the World Wolf and died. It seems like the Gods and the giants believe this.”

It was unavoidable. Tae Ho and Odin had disappeared after the World Wolf gulped the two of them, and as they were in the roots of the World Tree, a place blocked from external communication, the giants and even the Gods of Asgard wouldn't have been able to sense Odin. It was obvious to think that he had died.

“Next?”

“Giant king.....so the Magician King, Utgard Loki, did something to the World Tree and inflicted tremendous damage upon Asgard. Even I don't know what he did. Hraesvelgr has also grown angry because the highest root that it lived in suffered damage.”

“Hraesvelgr did?”

Nidhogg was the one that asked unconsciously.

The existence that always appeared in Ratatoskr's stories and the scary bird that really disliked Nidhogg.

Nidhogg ended up cursing Hraesvelgr because Ratatoskr forced it to do so, but it actually didn't really dislike Hraesvelgr. It was more curious as to what kind of existence it was.

But no matter how Nidhogg was feeling, Ratatoskr snorted and said, “Yeah, it got angry saying that it was all your fault. It said that it would peck out your eyes when it met you.”

“It's not my fault. I didn't do anything. I don't like things that

hurt.”

Nidhogg shrugged her shoulders and stammered. She had realized what pain was through the battle against Tae Ho, so she had shrunk even more after that.

Ratatoskr smiled once again.

“Reta.....kyaak! I’m sorry! I’m sorry!”

Ratatoskr couldn’t finish cursing and screamed while twisting its neck, but Odin didn’t even blink once. He gave Ratatoskr pain for a few more minutes and then deactivated the obedience rune.

“Keep speaking.”

“Freya! The Goddess of Magic, Freya, sealed Valhalla to block the attacks from the giants! And the Magician King took the giants to surround Valhalla!”

Ratatoskr spoke quickly almost as if spewing it out. Odin frowned.

“Certainly...so that’s the reason why we can’t connect with them?”

“Odin?”

Tae Ho, who was soothing the scared Nidhogg, called Odin’s name. It was because he didn’t understand how Valhalla had gotten sealed.

Odin let out a long sigh and started explaining.

“It’s a similar thing to the Great Barrier spread in Midgard. It can block external interference and also interfere with the things sent from inside. You can think of it as completely sealing the gates of a castle and cutting off all communication.”

‘Master.....’

Cuchulainn said in a low voice. It was a voice filled with anxiousness and relief.

Tae Ho also felt the same as him and let out a sigh of relief. He was worried since he couldn't connect with Idun even after having left the roots, but he could understand it if there was a reason like that.

“Don't worry too much. It's not a seal that will break that easily. It's only momentarily, but Idun and the others will be safe.”

12 days.

It wasn't short, but it wasn't too long either. If it was Freya, she would be able to endure it for even longer. So that was why it was fine for now.

Odin finished speaking with Tae Ho and activated the rune of obedience. Ratatoskr, who was listening to their conversation, screamed at the sudden pain.

“Kyak! Wh-Why?!”

It didn't do anything!

But that was the problem there.

“Continue speaking.”

Ratatoskr grumbled inwardly when Odin ordered it but resumed speaking immediately.

“The giants are trying to pierce through Asgard while surrounding it. It seems like they are planning to isolate Thor and the army of Valhalla that are fighting against the Frost Giant King!”

Now that they had sealed Valhalla, the only hope Freya had was in Thor who was outside.

They would capture Thor and cut off all hope. They would make Valhalla dry up and die.

Nidhogg blinked and admired Ratatoskr who'd explained as smoothly as a current of water.

“Ratatoskr is smart.”

“Of course, do I look like a fool like.....aaak! Yo-You are doing it for no re.....kyak!”

Ratatoskr cursed and screamed and glared at Nidhogg with scary eyes. While Nidhogg said that she wasn't, Odin gave Tae Ho a rock that had a rune engraved in it.

“You will be able to control the pain with this. I will entrust it to you.”

“Thank you.”

As the rune was given to Tae Ho, someone who seemed to treasure Nidhogg at a glance, the squirrel put on a horrible expression, but there was no one that would side with it.

“I-I will keep speaking. So please....”

Ratatoskr grabbed its head and begged. Tae Ho glared at it with cold eyes for a moment and then calmly manipulated the rune. It wasn't completely deactivated but instead at a really weak level.

A pain that was endurable but would still harass someone.

Ratatoskr realized that begging would be useless and then continued speaking while shedding cold sweat.

“A great barrier was also set in Midgard. Hraesvelgr said that Feay made it too hurriedly, but anyways, the giants and warriors of Valhalla that weren't able to return are still fighting.”

It wasn't good. Midgard was a real mess right now.

“What about Niflheim?”

“The giants also entered Niflheim to attack it. I passed through it while coming down here. The fight would have started by now.”

Ratatoskr answered immediately Odin's question.

It was a story that made one's worry deepen.

But thinking about it, it was an obvious thing. Whether the

barrier was spread or not, in the first place, Midgard couldn't help Asgard.

The only ones that could rescue Valhalla in this situation was both the army being led by Thor and Hela's army that was on standby in Niflheim.

That's why they would invade Niflheim and capture Hela. They would make Hela, the youngest daughter of Loki and sister to the World Wolf and Space Snake, submit to gain control over the army of undead.

Odin would do the same.

"Didn't you hear anything from Loki? The God of Fire and Lies."

"I don't know. There were no rumors about him."

"I understand. Rest for a moment."

He had heard almost everything he had to hear from Ratatoskr. When Odin finished speaking, Tae Ho decided to deactivate the obedience rune for the time being.

Odin turned to look at Tae Ho and said,

"Our first priority is going to Niflheim after passing through the lake of Mimir. We will rescue Hela and make her strength ours."

This was also an obvious thing.

But will that be possible?

The ones that were here was a superior-ranked warrior and a God that couldn't even move properly.

It was a thoughtless thing. It was like hitting a rock with an egg.

But Odin was also the God of War and didn't utter anything casually. Actually, Odin and Tae Ho did have some chances.

Because the two of them weren't alone.

Because Tae Ho had changed the plan to escape the roots which Odin had first come with.

“We have the ancient dragon—the black dragon, Nidhogg.”

They have left its real body that reached 2 kilometers and could bring the end of a world in the roots, but they still had the body that was hundreds of meters large.

Nidhogg was the oldest dragon that existed in Asgard. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that it was the God of dragons.

‘It fights really bad, but it doesn't matter as we have the best pilot.’

‘The one that controls dragons’.

Tae Ho could share all five senses with Nidhogg. He could become one with it and control it.

The best pilot that could perfectly control the dragon that possessed the best physical body but couldn't fight at all.

“Nidhogg, will you help us?”

“Yes, yes. I will help Tae Ho master. I'm happy that I can be of help.”

Nidhogg answered immediately at Tae Ho's question, and Tae Ho stroke her head.

“Thank you Nidhogg. Idun-nim will be grateful. Heda too.”

“I know that name. I saw them in your memories. The most gentle Goddess in the world and the most beautiful Valkyrie.”

‘Just when did you brainwash her?’

Cuchulainn spoke with a lukewarm voice, but Tae Ho ignored him. He nodded instead and complemented Nidhogg.

“Right, you know it well. Nidhogg is smart.”

“Hehehe.”

“This retard..... Kyak!”

Ratatoskr collapsed while being mad, but there was no one that

cared for it besides Nidhogg. Tae Ho stroke Nidhogg's cheek once again and said, "Nidhogg, when we go up, we will have to fight against the giants, but you just have to trust in me, okay?"

"Yes, I trust in Tae Ho master."

'Why don't you say oppa? That would be a better fit.'

Cuchulainn's bitter voice was ignored again.

Odin smiled bitterly and said,

"There's no time. Let's go to the lake of Mimir for now and organize ourselves there."

"I understand."

Tae Ho expressed etiquette while hitting his chest twice and then took Nidhogg to its body. Odin then ordered Ratatoskr, "Ratatoskr, take the lead."

Ratatoskr nodded with a teary face and moved outside the cave.

Because of that, Odin was left alone for a moment, so he took a deep breath and looked at the sky. He envisioned the worlds that laid far beyond the ceiling of the cave and secretly thought, 'It's not enough with Nidhogg alone.'

What they needed to win—

The strength that had to be added to Nidhogg.

Nidhogg started to move slowly, and Odin turned to look at it. He thought of Tae Ho's back that was moving with the essence of Nidhogg.

Idun's warrior.

The existence that had made alterations to both Odin's and the black dragon, Nidhogg's, destinies.

Odin nodded slowly.

He saved the method that would be used in the decisive moment deep in his heart.

Episode 39/Chapter 1: Hela (1)

The God of Fire and Lies, Loki, had three children with the giant, Angrboda.

The first, the World Wolf, and the second, the Space Snake, Jormungand, were beings that hoped for the destruction of the world as they had inherited the strong blood of their mother.

In addition, the two of them were special. The fate of the World Wolf was entangled with the greatest God, and the fate of the Space Snake was entangled with the strongest God.

The World Wolf, Fenrir, was the doom for the King of Gods, Odin.

The Space Snake, Jormungand, was the doom for the God of Thunder, Thor.

The Gods of Asgard feared the two children of Loki and wanted to take their lives, but it wasn't possible. It was because Loki had protected the two of them.

Loki himself knew that he was doing something childish. It was too obvious that the two children would grow up to become disasters.

But Loki couldn't kill them with his own hands.

The giant, Angrboda, took the opportunity when Loki dropped his guard to take the two children and escape. It was to raise the two of them from between the giants.

That's how the first and second kids disappeared.

Loki couldn't distinguish if he had really dropped his guard or he had made himself to be like that.

And only the third kid that got left behind stayed next to Loki.

It was a kid that had inherited more of Loki's blood compared to her other two brothers.

The kid that was born as someone that wanted to maintain the world wasn't born with a destructive power, but she wasn't a normal being either.

The three sisters making the threads of fate had said that Hela's fate was connected to someone in Asgard.

But the King of Gods, Odin, kept that a secret, and because of that, not even Odin's closest people like Thor or Heimdal knew who that person was.

While the World Wolf and the Space Snake grew as strong monsters, Hela also grew up.

She, who had all the appearances of a kid, a woman, and an old lady at the same time, received Odin's order and became the monarch of Niflheim.

The queen that ruled over the dead people.

She was loyal to Asgard. She sided up with Asgard even when Loki sided with the giants.

And the same held true after a hundred years had passed.

—

'But Cuchulainn, there's something I want to ask.'

'What is it? Do you still have other thoughts?'

It was when they were climbing Yggdrasil by following Ratatoskr.

Tae Ho, who was embracing the essence of Nidhogg inside of her body, said with a calm face,

'I feel like I even got accustomed to your grumbling as I keep hearing it. Anyways, listen to my question.'

'Right, what is it? Let's hear it.'

Nidhogg stirred while being in Tae Ho's embrace. Tae Ho patted her shoulders and continued speaking.

‘Asgard.....The reason Valhalla is in danger is because it’s in the core of the World Tree?’

Based on Ratatoskr’s words, Asgard was in a precarious situation.

Odin was certainly the King of Gods. The death of the supreme commander was something that would drop the morale of the entire army and bring problems in the orders.

But even if that was the case, everything had a limit.

It was impossible for the situation to turn over completely with Odin’s death alone.

Something else was added to his death.

A variable that made the scale tilt over to the side of the giants.

Tae Ho thought of the core of the World Tree he had seen in Loki’s memories, and Cuchulainn nodded.

‘That is possible. We couldn’t ask the details because the situation was urgent but....the Magician King treated it to be so important he himself had to hide. He wouldn’t have been able to trick Odin with something that was considered as nothing.’

The God of Fire and Lies, Loki, had raised several merits the past hundred years, but just like Cuchulainn had said, the Magician King wasn’t a foolish one.

It was impossible that he had set up all of his plans by trusting in Loki’s words.

He would probably have another information dealer.

And this meant that something that may deal a great blow to Asgard, although not to the point the Magician King thought of, existed in the core of the World Tree.

‘It seems too early to guess, but at the least, a struggle that cut off the path between the army Thor led and Valhalla would have been cut off. There’s a possibility Valhalla itself got attacked. Sealing all of Valhalla just because Odin disappeared is an extreme decision.’

Freya was a delicate one, but she wasn't feeble-minded at all. She was rather really strong.

Now, Freya had gotten scared by Odin's death and sealed up Valhalla?

It was something unimaginable. Something must have happened that necessitated her having to seal Valhalla.

'We will know when we get there. And....I'm saying this just in case, but don't blame Odin-nim too much. Odin also wouldn't have hoped for such a situation.'

One needed to take great risks to obtain great rewards.

The plan Odin had come up with had no problems when looking at it in an objective way, and actually, the Magician King hadn't doubted Loki even a little before everything had been revealed. It was good to say that he had completely fallen for Odin's trap.

If the unimaginable variable of the World Wolf having already been reborn wasn't there, Odin's plan would have succeeded.

Tae Ho nodded at Cuchulainn's words. It wasn't right to criticize when there was no problem in the process, but the results were bad.

Tae Ho had experienced something similar several times when he was a pro gamer.

But it was at that moment upon Nidhogg's body-precisely speaking, Odin's voice was heard from his seat upon its head.

"Ratatoskr, wait near here. It doesn't matter how far you go, but be at a distance that you can come immediately when I call you. Understood?"

"I understand. I understand. I will do so."

Ratatoskr stopped at the place and repeated some words while grabbing its head. It was frowning because the rune of obedience had activated weakly.

Odin treated Ratatoskr coldly and said,

“It’s impossible to do something to the rune of obedience no matter how far you go. Just know that the runes will explode once you get out of the range I decided, and you will lose your life.”

“I understand! I understand!”

Ratatoskr yelled and then curled up in a soft place. That sight was quite poor to see, but Odin didn’t feel sympathy for it. He looked down and then spoke to Tae Ho who was inside of Nidhogg.

“Idun’s warrior, you should also wait here. I will call you when the time is right.”

“I understand.”

‘The lake of Mimir is a secret, but well, it seems like he will call you after he takes all the preparations.’

While Cuchulainn mumbled in a low voice, Odin stood up and jumped inside the fog. The fog was so dense that Odin disappeared in a flash.

As Tae Ho stared into the patch of fog in which Odin had disappeared, he spoke to Cuchulainn once again.

‘The rune of obedience is really amazing. The process of engraving it is a bit difficult, but it seems like it will be effective even on giants.’

‘It is useful indeed, but it’s not omnipotent. It’s a method that works well on trash like Ratatoskr that are weak to pain.’

The rune of obedience wasn’t only exclusive to Asgard. Erin and the giants also had some similar magic.

Because of that, Cuchulainn knew well about the limits this rune had.

‘The rune of obedience doesn’t perfectly control the adversary. It just gives pain to the ones that don’t obey your orders. If it’s this much, don’t you think of something?’

‘It’s no different to torture.’

It was the same that it inflicted pain if one didn’t listen to the words.

The limit of the rune of obedience was like torture.

It was meaningless to the ones that had a strong will to endure the pain. In addition, it wasn’t that one could force their actions, so it was meaningless if the adversary became determined for death.

Also, one could notice who had the runes of obedience engraved in their bodies. That’s why it was hard to dispatch weak-willed beings like Ratatoskr that were engraved with the rune.

‘Right, even if it’s useful, it’s not as much as you think. Even though I said that it still feels somewhat strange, you do know what I’m talking about, right?’

‘I think so.’

Tae Ho nodded and patted Nidhogg’s shoulders and then pushed her away from him.

“Nidhogg wait a moment.”

“Huh?”

Nidhogg blinked and rose her upper body and Cuchulainn asked at that.

‘What is wrong?’

‘I’m a bit hungry.’

It had already been 9 days since he ate the golden apple. In addition, several cases happened in consecution after he woke up, so Tae Ho couldn’t even eat a bread crumb.

“Now that I see....Nidhogg, aren’t you hungry?”

Tae Ho was secondary, but he had never seen Nidhogg eat something.

Because of that, Nidhogg shook her head.

“I’m not hungry. The root of the World Tree is not tasty. It’s sour.”

Nidhogg hadn’t eaten anything besides the root of the World Tree for the thousand of years it had been trapped.

Cuchulainn nodded.

‘Indeed, thinking about its size....and in the first place, there are some dragons that don’t even need to eat.’

Nidhogg, that had a body of 2 kilometers, was something else, but there were also cases where ordinary dragons didn’t eat normally as it was almost impossible to maintain their big bodies with normal food.

‘Now that I think about it, Adenmaha also doesn’t eat much.’

Adenmaha could become a sea serpent that reached twenty meters in length, but he had never seen her eat anything proportionate to her size.

‘Most of the dragon race maintains their body with magic. They absorb the magic in the earth or the air and move. High-ranked dragons possess a dragon heart that is like a generator of magic.’

Cuchulainn listened to Tae Ho’s mumbling and explained in more detail.

Tae Ho nodded this time too and then turned to look at Nidhogg that was looking at him with round eyes. He stroke her head unconsciously and said,

“Then what about eating something with oppa.....ah, no-With me?”

“Yes, yes. I want to eat.”

‘Hey, wait. Didn’t your real feelings come out just now?’

Cuchulainn criticized sharply, but Tae Ho ignored him like usual.

In the first place, it wasn't because he had impure thoughts like Cuchulainn but because Nidhogg's actions were that of a sister.

“Here.”

Tae Ho took out some things from the air and offered them to Nidhogg. It was a simple sandwich that was made with bread, dried meat, and some vegetables.

But it was the first time Nidhogg saw this.

She blinked with eyes filled with curiosity and then slowly brought the sandwich to her mouth. She then stood up and yelled,

“Delicious!”

It was too different from the root of the World Tree. It was soft, tender, and delicious. Nidhogg couldn't think of other words as she lacked the languages to express herself, but she still kept repeating that it was delicious.

“Eat it slowly. Here, drink some water”

Tae Ho also became happy as Nidhogg did. He put on the smile of a dad and gave her a barrel of water.

But Cuchulainn clicked his tongue at that.

‘Hey, don't you have more delicious things? Why are you giving her something that's like army food? It must be the first proper meal she had in her life.’

‘If you give something too delicious at first, the joy you feel by eating something less delicious than that disappears. It's much better to climb up step by step.’

What would happen if she ate a golden apple from the start?

She probably wouldn't feel happiness from a sandwich like now.

‘I want to rebuke, but I can't.’

While Tae Ho and Cuchulainn were speaking among themselves, Nidhogg put on a depressed face. It was because she had eaten all

her sandwich.

Tae Ho put a smile at that and then took out another sandwich, and Nidhogg put on a bright smile as he'd expected.

‘Idun’s warrior.’

Odin’s voice was heard at that moment. The voice rang in his head just like when he conversed with Cuchulainn.

‘Come to the lake of Mimir alone. I will lead you down the path.’

It was Odin’s message magic. When he blinked once, he saw a shining butterfly approaching from far away.

Tae Ho stroke Nidhogg’s head instead of standing up right away.

“Nidhogg, can you wait for a moment? Odin is calling for me and I have to go.”

At that moment, Nidhogg’s face contorted, but it was only for a moment. She fixed her expression and nodded.

“Yes, yes. I will wait for Tae Ho master. Tae Ho master keeps promises well.”

“Right, I will go then. Eat slowly.”

Tae Ho took out one more sandwich and placed it in front of Nidhogg and then tried to stand up. But Nidhogg grabbed his hand.

“Tae Ho master.”

“Yes?”

He wondered if she may beg him to take her with him, but that wasn’t the case. She looked up at him and smiled brightly.

“I will also bless you. Tae Ho master likes blessings.”

‘She clearly saw your memories.’

Cuchulainn’s voice was kind of cold.

But Tae Ho also ignored it this time and looked at Nidhogg with the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’. The green words [Odin’s Valkyrie] that

appeared above her head moved his heart.

“I will entrust you, then.”

“Yes.”

Nidhogg nodded, in a good mood, and then grabbed on Tae Ho's hand to make him sit down. She then moved and gave Tae Ho the best blessing.

Tae Ho blinked as he was thinking that he would receive a blessing in his forehead, and Nidhogg flushed and laughed like a fool.

Meanwhile, Cuchulainn grew enraged.

But that rage obviously didn't reach Nidhogg and Tae Ho.

Nidhogg blinked her eyes a few times as if recalling her memories and then stuttered.

“Uh....um....ah! May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

She had to say 'Odin' instead of 'Idun', but Nidhogg thought that she was Idun's Valkyrie.

Tae Ho ended up laughing unconsciously and answered Nidhogg, who was frowning as if she was thinking that she'd gotten something wrong.

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

Nidhogg looked at Tae Ho with expecting eyes, and Tae Ho pondered for a moment and then blessed Nidhogg in her forehead.

—

“You came.”

< Episode 39 – Hela (1) > End

Episode 39/Chapter 2: Hela (2)

“You came.”

After following the shining butterfly and passing through the fog for some time—

Odin’s voice was heard suddenly, and then the fog filling his sight disappeared completely. Behind him, fog filled up the surroundings completely, but there was none of it in front of him as if a line was drawn.

Odin’s voice was heard from the front.

There was a big lake there and a wide boulder at a side. As for Odin, he was seated in front of that boulder.

Tae Ho followed the lake and stood in front of Odin. The big head that was on top of the boulder bothered him, so he unconsciously activated the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’.

[Mimir’s head]

It was the head of a giant, but the color of his name was green. Tae Ho removed the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’ and expressed etiquette in front of Odin. Odin leaned back on a root that surged up the ground and asked,

“Did you leave Nidhogg alone?”

“Cuchulainn is with her.”

They could never leave Nidhogg and Ratatoskr alone as they couldn’t know what the sly Ratatoskr would try to do.

‘You can’t entrust a fish to a cat.’

Tae Ho agreed with Cuchulainn’s words. Instead of leaving a sheep and a wolf in the same place, he’d decided to leave Gae Bolg in her hands.

“That’s a wise decision. You have done well.”

Odin smiled and complemented Tae Ho. His smile bore the message that Tae Ho's coming alone had been a test.

"Odin, there's something I want to ask."

"Speak."

"I want to know about Nidhogg, Ratatoskr, and Hraesvelgr—precisely speaking, about Ratatoskr."

"Right, we didn't have time to speak properly until now, and my misunderstandings have also run deep."

They'd kept running since they escaped the root, so there was no time to speak about the situation properly until now.

Odin looked at a distant place and opened his mouth slowly.

"There are several wonders and mystics in the world. I have certainly killed the giant Ymir and cleaned off Midgard with my brothers, but they weren't created from complete nothingness. Because of that, I can't see through all the things in the world. There are overwhelming parts too."

He had offered one of his eyes in the lake of Mimir to fill his wisdom and hung on a branch of the World Tree for nine days.

But there was still a region of nothingness. It was impossible to completely understand the world even for the King of Gods.

"Just as you know, Nidhogg is an ancient dragon that was born alongside the World Tree. It possesses strength enough to destroy the world, but as it's an existence that's caught in the roots, it was an existence with low danger rates. I misunderstood it....no, her, as someone that hoped for the destruction of the world, but the truth was different. That's when I realized my nothingness."

She had turned to resent the world because she'd gotten harassed by Ratatoskr for a long time, but she still had a white heart. She was bright and pure like a clean sheet of paper.

"Hraesvelgr, King of Birds, lives in the highest branches, and

unlike Nidhogg, it's not an existence that's lived since ancient times. It belongs to the ones that want to maintain the world, but it doesn't have much interest in the world. It's only interested in the highest branch that belongs to its territory."

The ones that lived in the highest branch were beasts that had the attributes of birds. Because of that, Odin also didn't put his interest in its territory, the highest branch.

"Ratatoskr is the only existence that can freely move in the World Tree. We don't know how it was born with such strength—no, permission, but whatever the case, it's the only one that can freely move between Nidhogg and Hraesvelgr."

Hraesvelgr's region wasn't a restricted area like the highest branch. Because of that, Odin could also go there if he became determined to do so.

But the roots was different. One could freely cross the line and enter the roots, but it was different if they wanted to get out of it. It was impossible even for the King of Gods, Odin.

"You should know it as you have fought it yourself, but Ratatoskr isn't a beast that is particularly strong. In addition, I have left it on standby as the only thing it does is move between the root and the branches. I was planning on using it when I needed it."

But of course, Ratatoskr was so big it could overwhelm normal giants or warriors with its big body that reached tens of meters, but when the King of Gods looked at it with his eyes, it wasn't that strong of an existence. It was a beast that could barely be faced against intermediate-ranked warriors.

"Ratatoskr isn't someone that hopes to destroy or maintain the world. It is exactly in the middle. I think it didn't bully Nidhogg because of a sense of duty but because it was simply its hobby."

Tae Ho opened his eyes widely at Odin's words. Having been ordered by someone may have been better, but Tae Ho felt like his

blood flowed backwards when he thought about how Ratatoskr had harassed Nidhogg for a long time just for its enjoyment.

Odin said in a lower tone as if trying to calm down Tae Ho.

“But I’m planning to watch it a bit more. I already felt that I should reinspect what I already knew.”

Odin saved his words. It wasn’t certain as to what kind of organization would be behind Ratatoskr. It wasn’t something to be rash about.

“Have your doubts been resolved?”

“Thank you for answering.”

Odin nodded with a satisfied face as Tae Ho expressed etiquette and then pointed at the wide boulder.

“Right, I will now introduce you to the head of Mimir that is my friend and adviser.”

“Idun’s warrior.”

The head of a giant that was placed in the boulder — the head of Mimir — said in a low voice. It’s voice gave one the feeling that it was a machine as it didn’t have any tonal fluctuations.

“He was born as a giant but was much closer to a being that wanted to maintain the world. In addition, I kept him close to me as it was really wise and asked advice from it. But unfortunately enough, he ended up losing his life in the negotiation of peace that resulted in a fight against the Vanir.”

“In the negotiation of peace?”

Odin smiled bitterly as Tae Ho grew surprised.

“It’s because there were some problems with the prisoners of war we exchanged with each other, but don’t worry too much as it’s all in the past. You should know it well as you have visited them directly. They are our reliable allies.”

Tae Ho thought of the chief of the Vanir, Heimstream, and nodded.

But there was a part that bothered him. The Vanir had sent Freya, Freyr, and Njord as captives of war. You could know just by looking at Freya, but they were all talented and powerful Gods.

The Vanir had sent the greatest ones among themselves as war prisoners. It meant that they were being sincere.

But if a problem occurred to the point that someone lost their life, then that meant that there origin of the problem was on the Aesir rather than on the Vanir.

And just like Tae Ho had guessed, the origin of the problem was on the Aesir.

The race of the Aesir, that didn't want to send someone outstanding like the Vanir, had sent the fool God, Hoenir, that was really handsome, but his head was empty.

They had sent an advisor with him as they would notice in an instant that Hoenir was a fool, and that advisor was the giant Mimir.

But even if it was the wise Mimir, he couldn't hide all the childishness of Hoenir in all places.

The Vanir realized that the Aesir had sent an useless captive unlike them and killed Hoenir and Mimir in madness, and because of this, the Vanir and the Aesir had to resume a short war once again.

But whatever the case, this was all in the past, just like Odin had said.

Odin looked at the head of Mimir and continued speaking.

“Mimir is dead, but his wisdom still remains in his head. That's why I retrieved his head and placed it here. It's because in this place, Mimir is able to think and speak like he did in his previous

life thanks to rune magics and the power of the lake.”

Mimir, who became an existence not unlike a machine after losing his life, turned into a more excellent advisor.

Some Gods doubted that Odin had planned all of this to be able to use him freely for himself, but this was all mere suspicion. Clear proof didn't exist anywhere.

“I checked the situation outside through the head of Mimir.”

Odin rolled his fingers and a hologram-like video appeared in the air.

There were worlds piled up like floors with the World Tree at its center, and they were Niflheim, Midgard, and Asgard respectively, going from below to up

“The Magician King destroyed the core of the World Tree, and Asgard perceived great changes due to it. That aftereffect made the force Thor was leading get isolated among the giants, and several fortresses of Valhalla were destroyed as well.”

It was like Cuchulainn had guessed.

The core of the World Tree wasn't a big weakness that could destroy Asgard in an instant like the Magician King had thought, but it was enough to deal big damages to it.

“When Valhalla got sealed up, the giant kings that were hiding in Jotunheim until now started to appear. They are cowards that just looked at everything in fear that their forces may decline, but because of that they could maintain their strength until now.”

The ones called as giant kings were really strong. There were even some that were stronger than the Five Fingers, the closest subordinates of the Magician King.

“But unfortunately, this is everything Mimir's head knows. With Freya sealing up Valhalla, the connection Mimir had with the three sisters was cut off and Hugin and Munin, that served as my eyes

and ears, went to Valhalla after receiving a call from Freya.”

Their eyes and ears were closed right now. It was fortunate enough that they got the recent information.

“Just like you’ve seen, the situation is really harsh but we have to find our own path.”

Odin looked at Tae Ho again.

“Our current objective is to retake Niflheim or protect it. Hela, the queen of the dead, is a long loyal person of Asgard, so she will gladly lend us her army of the dead.”

Compared to what was known from the God of Fire and Lies, Loki, he could be said that he was a loyal follower that has been known from a long time ago.

He didn’t throw away her loyalty towards Asgard even though he faced disregard and insults for hundreds of years.

And that was the same for Hela.

Even though she’d always been suspected because of her father, she still kept her loyalty towards Asgard.

“If we place our hands on the strength of Niflheim, Midgard comes next, but there are now some doors in the new Great Barrier compared to the old one. We will enter Midgard through one of those doors and gather the warriors of Valhalla that are scattered and subjugating the giants.”

Tae Ho thought of Bracky and Siri that had left for Midgard first. Perhaps, they may still be fighting against evil spirits in Midgard even now.

“The last is Asgard. It will be different based on the situation, but we will concentrate on regrouping with Thor and recapturing Valhalla.”

They would gather strength from Niflheim and Midgard and take back Valhalla.

It was a dream-like proposal. There were too many mountains to climb over.

But Odin's smile didn't disappear.

"If I was alone, I wouldn't have been able to even imagine it. In the first place, being in this place alive is a miracle of itself. I will thank you once again. It's all thanks to you, Idun's warrior."

"I'm much obliged."

Tae Ho bowed and expressed etiquette. Odin's words were all true but even so, he felt embarrassed being complimented like this.

Odin smiled once more at Tae Ho's humble attitude and then moved his hand.

"The reason I called you here is because I have something to give you. Take this."

The thing Odin took out from the air was a sealed barrel of alcohol. Tae Ho reflexively activated his 'Eyes of the Dragon'.

[Skaldskapar Mjadar]

[The Mead of Poetry]

He couldn't easily guess its effect, but it didn't seem to be a normal object as its name was shining in white and gold.

"I will tell you an old story."

Odin buried his body in a root and started speaking.

"When the fight between the Vanir ended, we held a ceremony at the end of the peace treaty. Us Aesir and the Vanir spat saliva in a big barrel."

Tae Ho forced himself to put a normal expression. It was questionable as to how that was exactly related to the peace treaty, but they must have done the ceremony because it held some meaning.

And it really did have a meaning behind.

“We created a human named Kvasir with the saliva of the Gods that was gathered that way. He was a really clear and beautiful God as he was born from the saliva of Gods that contained wisdom and wisdom in it. We ordered Kvasir to roam Midgard to transmit new knowledge to the humans.”

When the fight between the Aesir and the Vanir came to an end, Midgard had become a land of wildness. It was because the Gods poured all their attention in their battle and couldn't care for the humans.

“But unfortunately, Kvasir ended up losing his life in a trap set by the wicked dvergars, Fjalar and Galar. Those evil bastards mixed the blood of Kvasir with honey and that became the Mead of Poetry.”

Odin turned to look at the Mead once again and said while smiling.

“For the Gods, the Mead of Poetry is merely a sweet and delicious alcohol. Although that enough makes it special, if humans drink this alcohol, they can receive part of Kvasir's wisdom and become an outstanding poet.”

The effects depended on who drank it.

And the only ones Odin named were the Gods and the humans. He didn't mention the ones that were in between them yet.

“What will happen if a warrior of Valhalla drinks this alcohol? I think that you know the answer as you possess the rune of Bragi.”

Odin tilted his head as for Tae Ho he immediately came up with an answer.

“Strengthening....of a saga.....”

“You got it right. The Mead of Poetry has an effect that strengthens one saga of a warrior of Valhalla.”

It had the same principle of Bragi's rune, the God of Music and

Poetry, that strengthened your saga.

“It’s good to strengthen a big saga and then strengthen a small saga meant for revenge, and it’s also good to focus all of its strength in one saga and make it stronger. I will leave the decision entirely on you.”

Tae Ho’s saga was Tae Ho’s story so the one that could make the most correct decision was himself.

“Thank you. I will think of it well and choose.”

“Right, if it’s you, you will be able to come with a good choice.”

The Mead of Poetry wasn’t the trump card Odin had thought about, but it would certainly bring Tae Ho’s strength to a higher level.

Odin dropped his shoulders as if he felt exhausted and said,

“We are in a hurry, but we still need some rest. We will depart tomorrow morning, so until then, rest with Nidhogg.”

“I understand. Let’s meet tomorrow.”

The lake of Mimir was wide, but it wasn’t to the point that could accommodate Nidhogg. In addition, the location of the lake of Mimir was a secret spot that even few of Odin’s closest Gods knew about. Letting Tae Ho, who was only a superior-ranked warrior, enter this place was already an exceptional case.

Odin finished speaking and then lightly raised his fist and hit his chest, and Tae Ho also did the same.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Tae Ho turned around. It was already deep in the night.

—

As soon as he returned, Nidhogg faced him with a cute smile.
But there was a weird part.

“Tae Ho master, come. I have been doing well with Cuchulainn-oppa.”

“Cuchulainn....oppa?”

Tae Ho opened his eyes sharply reflexively and then turned to look at Gae Bolg that was being held by Nidhogg.

Cuchulainn then spoke with a proud voice.

‘She listened to my words well. She’s pretty and nice.’

“Ehehe.”

Nidhogg blushed and twisted her body as if she was embarrassed at the words ‘pretty and nice’.

He had left Cuchulainn to keep apart a sheep and a wolf, but he ended up leaving a fish to a cat.

Cuchulainn laughed while Tae Ho looked at him with lukewarm eyes, and Nidhogg just smiled merrily as if she was happy that she was with the two of them.

And Ratatoskr frowned alone as he was looking at this from afar.

< Episode 39 – Hela (2) > End

Episode 39/Chapter 3: Hela (3)

Niflheim was the land of death.

That place was hard for the living being to continue living as it was swept by extreme cold and the sun didn't rise.

Because of that, the people living in Niflheim was really low even though it was as wide as Midgard.

Niflheim. The land of death. The world of the dead.

Niflheim was Asgard's underworld. The souls of the humans that died in Midgard and couldn't enter Valhalla stayed in Niflheim for a moment and prepared for a new life.

Extreme cold swept up.

That thing that was the same everyday was so cold it could freeze one's lungs just by inhaling some air.

But that wasn't the case for the giants of Jotunheim. The frost giants that grew in a land with the same conditions as Niflheim showed leisure in this land.

The army of the giant king, Hrumbark, marched.

He and his army were exhausted in peace as they had only stayed in Jotunheim and saved their power since the Great War. They were bengs that wanted to destroy the world and desired both destruction and massacre.

The giants numbered 600, and there were close to 100,000 evil spirits.

The giants couldn't cope with their strength. They couldn't rest easily because of their desire to destroy and wanted to tear apart the evil spirits.

It was unavoidable. Because this land was Niflheim, the land of the dead.

There were no living beings here to grant the blood and screams the giants desired. The dead ones did scream and cry, but it was comparatively lacking to the ones that were alive.

“It will be different if you go to Helheim. You will find the Queen of the Dead, Hela, living there, and her subordinates are also living beings.”

The giant king, Hrumbark, said with a loud voice.

“Let’s destroy Helheim and fill Niflheim with the screams and cries of Hela.”

Hrumbark laughed. The other giants panted as if they were waiting for that moment and laughed alongside their king.

The Magician King Utgard Loki had said,

‘Destroy Helheim and turn the underworld into a mess. Destroy the cycle of the living and the dead beings and create chaos.’

Hrumbark didn’t like the Magician King all that much. The orders he gave were always complicated.

But he liked that he had said that he was able to do whatever he wanted with Hela.

“Let’s go.”

To seek some blood.

“Let’s go.”

To give birth to screams and cries.

Hrumbark and his army marched towards Helheim.

—

Hela went out to the floating garden.

The God of Messages, Hermod, had told her not to go out to the garden, but it was unavoidable.

There wasn’t an army from Asgard that would protect Niflheim

for her.

The dead ones gathered next to Hela.

She, who could take the appearance of a young girl, woman, and old lady, walked with haughty steps and consoled her citizens. Stepping up with courage made their fear subside a little.

The army of the dead greeted Hela. The ones at the front were people that were warriors of Midgard in their previous lives.

The ones that couldn't die in the battlefields and died in their beds.. The ones that had died by disease. The ones that couldn't fight and had been slain by beasts.

They were people that didn't have what it took to enter Valhalla, but they were still the most proficient in battle among the dead ones.

Next to them were the second most proficient in battle.

They were wicked people that couldn't even dream about entering Valhalla.

The ones that fled from the battlefield, betrayed their comrades, and the ones that brought destruction to their allies and even themselves because of their jealousy and envy.

It seemed like they hadn't been able to throw that side of them away, for they all had sly and wicked eyes. They were people that would have fled already if this place wasn't Niflheim and if it wasn't a place that didn't have anywhere to flee to.

And behind them was the group with the biggest number lined up with nervous faces.

The ones that weren't accustomed to battle.

The ones that lived all their lives as farmers, fishermen, blacksmiths, carpenters, researchers, cooks, and other random professions.

They were weak. They were the ones that had ignored Valhalla

even though they'd lived in a world which knew of its existence.

But Hela didn't pity them. Midgard wasn't a place to provide warriors for Valhalla. A world with only warriors in it couldn't work properly. Midgard was able to be maintained because each one of them existed.

The ones belonging to the third category faced Hela with stiff expressions, and she showed a smile towards them. Some felt the fresh smile of a girl, and some felt charmed at the smile of a woman. And others felt gentleness that came out from a mature and old woman.

"Please, get on."

The strongest and bravest warrior of the first category, Galeon, pulled a ghost horse and stood in front of Hela.

He hadn't been able to die because he was too strong, and because of that, he couldn't enter Valhalla.

That wasn't actually the real story, but he was still the most reliable warrior and advisor Hela had. And he, who'd received the trust from Hela, had the strength of an intermediate-ranked warrior or above.

"Thank you."

Hela got on the ghost horse. The army of the undead reached 200,000 in numbers. As the army that was marching towards Helheim was composed of 600 giants and 100,000 evil spirits, it was almost twice the number.

But they couldn't ascertain victory, and defeat was more probable.

It was an army that the strongest warrior was merely at the intermediate-ranked level.

They could plentifully face the evil spirits, but the problem lay in the appearance of giants. The fight could tilt to the side of the

giants just by having the 600 giants charge towards them.

But they still had to go. They couldn't collapse without any resistance.

“Let's go,”

Hela said. At the gesture of her warrior, Galeon, the dead ones blew the horn trumpets.

He ordered the army of the dead to march.

—

An evil spirit that had the head of a dog and body of a human went out to scout.

The dead spirit that had went up ahead riding a ghost horse discovered the army of giants.

With this, the giant king, Hrumbak, and Hela knew where their armies would face each other.

“We will fight in the valley.”

“It seems like the battle will occur in the valley.”

It was a mutual agreement. The place the two armies could fight on could only be limited as both sides surpassed the hundred thousand mark.

The reason Hela had chosen to go out and fight was because of the giants. The existences of the giants made the purpose of the walls meaningless, so it was rather better to use the dead spirits on a wide plains in the most efficient way.

Both armies moved. There was a bit of a dissonance as a perfect agreement couldn't exist, so in the end they ended up facing one another when the sun was at its peak.

The giants panted due to excitement. Hrumbak imagined the screams Hela would let out and unsheathed his sword.

Hela raised her hand in front of those giants with a dispirited

face.

The sound of horn trumpets was heard from both sides.

The battle had started.

—

“We are late! Late! The battle has already started!”

Ratatoskr, that had gone out to scout as Odin had ordered it to, chirped quickly. Looking at how it spoke, it seemed that it was telling them not to go as they were already late.

But only Nidhogg listened to its words among the group.

Odin activated the rune of obedience to make Ratatoskr shut up and then turned to look at Tae Ho.

“With Nidhogg’s speed, we won’t arrive that late.”

Odin and Tae Ho were currently in the forehead of Nidhogg while lying down.

The reason they did this and sent Ratatoskr out to scout was to prepare for the battle to come.

As soon as the group reached Niflheim, Odin started to engrave several runes in Nidhogg’s huge body. This was the best he could do as he couldn’t go out to the battlefield due to his injuries that hadn’t healed completely.

The essence of Nidhogg moved her fingers sluggishly with a nervous expression.

It was because she was afraid to fight.

The only time Nidhogg had fought since being born was with Tae Ho. And actually even that was hard to call it a fight as she had only gotten hit one sidedly.

“It will be fine. Idun’s warrior will do great. Just believe in him and entrust your body.”

“Ye-Yeah. I believe in Tae Ho master.”

Nidhogg hurriedly nodded at Odin's words.

"We spent too much time. I will pray for your victory,"

Odin floated in the air and said. Tae Ho hit his chest twice towards Odin, and Nidhogg copied Tae Ho's movements sloppily.

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

"For Asgard and the Nine Realms."

Odin moved to Ratatoskr's head, and Tae Ho grabbed Nidhogg's hand and went to the insides of her body.

As the current body wasn't that big compared to the original 2 kilometer-long body, the heart room wasn't that big, but Tae Ho felt that it wasn't bad at all. It was because he felt like he had entered a control cabin.

There was a big chair that Nidhogg had made by Tae Ho's order in the center of the room. Tae Ho looked at the tools that were at the sides of his chair and put on a bitter smile.

"Are they made poorly?"

Tae Ho shook his head when Nidhogg asked with an unconfident voice.

"No, it's the best. It's exactly as I wanted it."

Tae Ho smirked and then sat on the chair, and then, Nidhogg sat in front of Tae Ho. He needed physical contact to use the 'One that Controls Dragons', so they had to assume a posture so that Nidhogg could enter Tae Ho's embrace when she leaned back.

Nidhogg waited for a moment while leaning forwards. It was because she had heard something beforehand.

Tae Ho took out the Mead of Poetry from the air. He had thought about it, but there was only one choice.

'Idun's Warrior.'

The saga Tae Ho relied the most among the several sagas he had.

The one he liked the most.

Tae Ho drank from the Mead. Nidhogg sniffed as a sweet aroma was emanated, and she smacked her lips.

And it was at that moment — Tae Ho drank all the liquid in the Mead without leaving a single drop and then opened his eyes abruptly.

It wasn't that there was a problem with the Mead. He could feel that his saga was being strengthened just like Odin had said.

Bragi's rune.

The God of Music and Poetry.

Light emanated in the rune of Bragi that was drawn in Tae Ho's tongue. The strength it emitted grew much stronger than before.

‘Ahh.’

‘Ahhhh.’

Tae Ho let out a sound. It was merely a sound of admiration, but it was enough with that. That seemed to be just like a sweet song.

Nidhogg flushed and put on an enchanted face, and Cuchulainn mumbled as if it was absurd.

‘I think I know how Bragi and Idun got together.’

For an exclamation to be heard as a sweet song.

Tae Ho took a deep breath. When he exhaled, Nidhogg leaned on Tae Ho naturally.

‘Let's go. To the battlefield,’

Cuchulainn said. Tae Ho closed his eyes and activated his saga. The raised the level of his saga by one stage as it got empowered by Bragi's strengthened rune.

[Strengthened Saga: The One that Controls Dragons]

Nidhogg convulsed and let out an exclamation, but she didn't

resist and received Tae Ho's command. She entrusted her body and soul to Tae Ho.

Tae Ho opened his eyes and saw the world through Nidhogg's body. The world he saw with the eyes of a dragon that was a hundred meters big was different to the world he saw with his own eyes.

But Tae Ho grew quickly accustomed to it. He then extended both of his hands forward and placed them on the tools he had prepared beforehand.

‘Will that really be enough?’

A keyboard and a mouse.

The objects Nidhogg had made after listening to Tae Ho's explanation and strange tools that Cuchulainn couldn't even grasp where it was used on.

But it was different for Tae Ho.

If he had to control someone or something, this was the most familiar thing for him.

A keyboard on his left hand and a mouse in his right.

Nidhogg fluttered its wings and then jumped up and started to fly.

Tae Ho's hands started to move quickly.

And at the same time, something else moved. There was something newly created.

[Synchro rate: 73%]

[Saga: The Legendary Pro Gamer]

Before being a warrior of Valhalla and a warrior of Idun and even before being the strongest warrior of Dark Age, Kalsted.

Pro gamer, Lee Tae Ho.

A smile spread across Tae Ho's face.

The roar of the black dragon, Nidhogg, shook the sky and the ground greatly.

< Episode 39 – Hela (3) > End

Episode 39/Chapter 4: Hela (4)

That was something one could only hear if they had ears.

They could only feel it if they were stepping on the ground.

The battlefield that had two huge armies gathered on either side froze for a moment.

The noisy sounds of the horn trumpets were suppressed by an even louder noise.

The warriors that were yelling and raising their morale shut their mouths and stayed silent.

It didn't differentiate from the evil spirits, giants, or dead spirits. Everyone standing on the battlefield turned to look at the same direction in disbelief and witnessed a monster from the frozen silence.

It was a monstrous, dark dragon.

Its scales were darker than darkness, and its eyes were deeper than the night.

It was a black star located in the ash-colored sky.

That thing spread all its four wings and raised its four horns as if it would stab the sky at any time.

The roar covered the sky and ground one more time, and it sowed seeds fear across the entire battlefield.

The battlefield was wide.

The space that could hold a great army of three hundred thousand was really huge.

But everyone in the battlefield was overwhelmed.

The black dragon was huge.

No matter how big it was, it wasn't as big as the battlefield, but that wasn't important.

An individual that was a hundred meters long.

The marvel that size created.

Would ants looking at a giant feel like this?

Everyone in the battlefield held their breaths. The black dragon made them do that, and it made them breathe once again. It made them vomit out the fear that had surged up instinctively.

The black dragon fluttered its wings.

It charged towards the battlefield.

—

It was really a thrilling thing seeing more than three hundred thousand beings turned to look at you.

Nidhogg breathed roughly. She struggled at the joy she experienced for the first time in her life. It was hard to control herself because her body heated up.

The joy of receiving attention.

A situation where countless beings focused upon each action one made, and the situation that made one feel like a God for a moment.

That was a really big stimulation for Nidhogg who had been alone for a long time.

Nidhogg didn't know what to do. It was hard to express her current feeling with her short language, and because of that, she couldn't stay still. She shuddered while having her cheeks flushed and then turned around and embraced Tae Ho strongly.

Tae Ho felt Nidhogg and then concentrated on her. He hung on while being swept up by Nidhogg's worries by thinking of the experiences he had in front of millions of spectators when he was the best pro gamer in the world. He calmed down Nidhogg's excitement.

The hands that were placed upon the keyboard and mouse moved faster. Tae Ho controlled Nidhogg's movements more delicately.

‘The Legendary Pro Gamer’.

The new saga was focused on manipulating something. Tae Ho could see Nidhogg's status through the data that appeared in numbers.

Her health, magic power, and even her concentration appeared in Tae Ho's head.

“Let's go,”

Tae Ho said to Nidhogg. He looked at the battlefield through her eyes. He flew over the dead spirits and charged towards the giants and evil spirits.

Actually, this situation wasn't the best.

The best was to fight while riding on Nidhogg just like he did with Rolo or Adenmaha.

But that wasn't possible.

Nidhogg fought too poorly to do that.

Rather than working together, it was more probable that she would have become an obstacle.

Because of that, Tae Ho chose to stay in the heart room. If he had to concentrate only on controlling Nidhogg, this was much better.

What the battlefield needed more right now wasn't a powerful individual that could defeat another powerful individual but a huge existence that could crush a huge army.

Nidhogg roared once again and then arrived in front of the giants.

Cuchulainn had said,

‘Concentrate on destroying the army. Don't think of it as a spot, but as a side.’

Tae Ho also agreed. His words were right.

“Let’s go.”

In this moment, Tae Ho was the boss of a game. A raid boss that faced the attacks of several beings head on.

A smile appeared on Tae Ho’s face, and Nidhogg howled once again.

Kwagagang!

The landing of the black dragon created a loud explosion. The giants could then finally realize how huge the dragon was up close. About ten giants were crushed to death, and about twice that number suffered serious injuries.

“Let’s go.”

Tae Ho said once again. He made the black dragon turn at that moment. Instead of using detailed attacks like biting or scratching a giant one by one, he used its huge body more efficiently.

The black dragon turned around in place. It’s tail that measured a third of its total body swept the battlefield.

That was like a natural disaster. As the huge body of a hundred meters turned around, a radius of a hundred meters turned to ruins in an instant, and it crushed and destroyed everything in its path.

But that was merely the start.

The black dragon didn’t fly. It just charged and kept turning around. But this time, it didn’t only sweep the battlefield with its tail.

Venom was fired from the mouth of the black dragon. The giants that were covered by it didn’t get infected. They just melted.

The width of that venom wasn’t small. It was fired at an overwhelming range.

But of course, it wasn't strong enough to melt the giants in an instant. Only the ones that were closest to the dragon melted down completely. The remaining ones were poisoned, and some vomited out their damaged organs and suffered.

All of this happened in a few moments.

But the black dragon didn't stop.

It couldn't.

'It's coming.'

Cuchulainn spoke. The giant king, Hrumbak, had lost almost a hundred giants by the surprise attack and ordered his army to spread out. The lowest or inferior giants could only become sacrifices for the black dragon. It was much better to make them march towards the army of the dead.

He would gather the strength of intermediate giants or above and hunt down the dragon.

It was the right decision. The army of the evil spirits charged towards the army of the dead with the sound of the horn trumpet. The giants that wanted to get away from the dragon as fast as possible started running really quickly.

But Hela didn't stay still either. She didn't know the identity of the black dragon yet, but seeing that it had crossed over her army and attacked the giants, it could be treated as an ally.

No. If it was an enemy, she should have had to disperse her army and flee in the first place.

"Galeon!"

Galeon, who was next to her, blew his horn trumpet at her sharp order. The army of the dead pulled out their weapons to face the army that was charging towards them. The existence of the black dragon that seemed to be their ally gave them courage.

Clashes occurred in several places of the battlefield. The screams

and yells of the evil spirits and dead spirits covered the battlefield.

At that moment, the black dragon moved. It showed an unprecedented action that got out of Hrumbak's expectations.

The black dragon didn't charge towards Hrumbak and his subordinates. It rather turned its back on them and chased the giants that were charging towards the dead spirits. And at some point, it started to roll on the ground!

A giant snowball.

The giants felt the dragon to be like that. They screamed as they were crushed under the overwhelming body.

In addition, the giants weren't the only ones to be crushed this time. A lot of evil spirits were crushed too, so many that the black scales of the dragon were dyed in red.

Tae Ho used the huge body the best he could.

Why did a huge dragon have to extend its head to face a small existence? Why did it have to lower itself to the level of lowly beings? Why did it have to face them one by one?

This wasn't a game.

It wasn't a boss that should be eradicated.

He chose the most logical option.

He would fight the most favorable fight.

Show the majesty of the real final boss!

"Nidhogg! Roll!"

A black dragon that was a hundred meters in size rolling on the ground would give anyone a real shock. It would have been better if it had swept its tail or fired venom.

But for it to roll on the ground....

Its actions were actually creating big damages.

That action that planned for at all by the giants paralyzed them, and that short moment created an even bigger tragedy.

Hrumbak opened his mouth widely with a dumb face and then barely managed to curse out. The giants that were in command let out orders once again. Spread out the most while dodging the black dragon. Enter through the breaches of the dead spirits!

At the same time, Hrumbak and his warriors charged towards the black dragon. They weren't accustomed to hunting beings that were bigger than them, but they couldn't do anything about it. They couldn't leave the dragon alone.

The situation was flowing just like Tae Ho had expected.

And because of that, Tae Ho pressed down his excitement. He said almost like whispering.

"It's phase two."

Tae Ho's left hand danced on top of the keyboard. A black dragon surged up while Nidhogg exclaimed.

And Hrumbak saw that dragon. He felt joy when he looked at the dragon that was about to charge towards them. He grabbed his huge axe and roared.

Hrumbak was 20 meters tall. It was possible that his huge axe would prove effective on the hundred meter-long dragon.

And Tae Ho also knew that. He looked at the giants that were firing and throwing weapons towards him. Nidhogg looked at the throwing weapons that covered the sky and squeezed out all the strength she didn't even know she had. She fired a strong magical wave to block the rain of arrows and then brought chaos to the giants and evil spirits with her Dragon Fear.

But it wasn't the time yet. Tae Ho pierced through the throwing weapons and opened his mouth. He activated the most effective saga in this situation.

And at that moment, Cuchulainn also opened his mouth. He shook his head and said while looking at his disciple that was really wicked.

‘Ragnar, you were right.’

A cheat instead of a saga.

He wasn’t talking about the ‘Warrior that Rides on Valkyries’.

Nor was he talking about the ‘Legendary Pro Gamer’ that let him control the black dragon, Nidhogg, as if it was his own body.

The only reason he could allow the cute, pretty, good, and pure Nidhogg to give the black-hearted Tae Ho the best blessing several times a day.

Bragi’s rune activated, and at the same time, the strength of the saga created another marvel.

[Strengthened Saga: The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

The black dragon howled, but there wasn’t only one howl. Hrumbak grew terrified at the other howl that was heard above his head. He found himself at a loss for words at the big and dense shadow that had appeared suddenly.

[Fake Nidhogg]

[Odin’s Valkyrie]

Another black dragon.

The next moment, two catastrophes danced over the head of the giants.

< Episode 39 – Hela (4) > End

Episode 39/Chapter 5: Hela (5)

People tend to not think about anything when they face a really bewildering scene.

And that was the same for the giants and evil spirits.

When the roar of the second dragon erupted, the giants lost their words. They just looked at the dragon dumbfoundedly.

The one that got a hold of himself the fastest was Hrumbak.

No matter what the situation, he was still a king. He opened his mouth reflexively and squeezed out his voice out of desperation. He put strength into his hands that he had lost unconsciously and yelled.

“It’s a fake!”

He hadn’t seen through the fake Nidhogg like the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’ Tae Ho had. It was the answer his instincts of a beast and battle experiences he had accumulated had given him.

All the eyes at the place fixed on to him, and at that moment, Hrumbak became certain of it. He thought of the proof that would validate his answer that he came up beyond logic.

The second dragon was a fake.

The first piece of evidence was that it had appeared without any signs of arriving above their heads.

If it was an existence that was a hundred meters long, it would always have a presence that couldn’t be hid.

‘That’s why it’s fake. It’s magic. I will welcome it.’

Hrumbak spoke to himself and then immediately thought of the second answer.

‘If it was real, there is no way it just stayed watching until now.’

In the first place, it would have been more effective for two

dragons to appear at the same time and sweep up the battlefield.

‘Fake magic. I welcome it!’

Hrumbak grew even more certain of it and then yelled once again by gathering all the air from his lungs.

“It’s a fake! A trick! Don’t get scared!”

Kwagang!

His voice got buried in the loud sound, and Hrumbak fell in shock on top of the shaking ground.

The second black dragon.

It was the sound the dragon, that Hrumbak was certain was fake, had made. The loud sound was made by rolling in the ground, just like the first dragon did.

“Uaaak!”

“It’s real!”

“Real!”

Several voices were heard at the same time. The ones that were crushed by the second dragon became paste and died, and the ones that hadn’t immediately perished screamed in agony.

It was real.

Not a fake.

It had a real body.

Hrumbak’s head turned white, and the giants at his surroundings turned to look at him as if asking what was going on.

Bewilderment, resentment, and anger.

Gazes with several expressions mixed behind them.

The ground shook once again. The second dragon was still rolling on top of the battlefield.

And there was still the first dragon remaining.

Hrumbak raised his head. The giants also struggled to keep balance on top of the shaking ground and glared at the first black dragon that was in the sky.

Nidhogg grew excited once more at their gazes.

But Tae Ho calmed down the dragon and let out a long sigh. He quickly moved his hand on the keyboard and mumbled,

“Phase three.”

The phase two had worked. That’s why he would immediately proceed with the phase three. He wasn’t thinking about waiting for the giants to grow accustomed to his phase two at all.

Tae Ho clicked his mouse, and Nidhogg buried her head on Tae Ho’s neck and played affectionately.

“Right, right. Good girl.”

Tae Ho removed his hands from his setup and patted Nidhogg’s shoulders for a moment. It was to listen to her affectionate plays but also to proceed with the phase three.

The rune magic the King of Gods, Odin, and God of Magic had engraved.

As soon as he touched Nidhogg’s right shoulder, the big rune that was engraved on the shoulder of the black dragon activated. And as he stroke her back, the several runes that were engraved on the back of the black dragon also activated in consecution and showed their power.

The black dragon roared as the sky opened. The ash colored sky was suddenly dyed in black!

A mass welcoming magic.

A black dragon with six pairs of wings appeared in a really high place of the sky.

A black dragon with two horns appeared a bit lower than that.

There was a bit of a difference with each dragon, but twelve dragons, that were all black and huge, pierced the clouds and appeared.

It was all a welcoming magic.

It was merely a virtual image that had no real body compared to the fake dragons made with the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’.

But it wasn’t appraised as such for the giants and evil spirits.

It was because they had already experienced the phase two, the black dragon that possess a true body.

Tae Ho touched Nidhogg’s left shoulder. The black dragon roared once again, and at that moment, the twelve dragons that were in the sky roared at the same time.

Mass echo magic.

A simple trick that amplified a sound and made it ring in several places.

But the effect of it was absolute. The giants and the evil spirits couldn’t think properly under the roar that seemed like it would split the skies. An image of fourteen dragons rolling in the ground was drawn in their heads.

“Phase four.”

Tae Ho lightly swept through Nidhogg’s neck. It was a silent and stealthy magic compared to the ones from before.

After a few seconds since the twelve black dragons appeared–

The giants and evil spirits tried to move their heads that’d been paralyzed even while the second dragon was rolling on the battlefield. The ones that had clashed against the dead army resumed their fight almost half-heartedly.

But someone among them said,

“Escape.”

They couldn't win. There were fourteen black dragons.

“Flee.”

Similar words popped up in other places.

It was fear.

And that fear spread really easily and quickly.

Words saying that they should escape.

There were evil spirits and giants in the battlefield.

And that was something that could come out from them. That was an emotion that everyone had in the battlefield.

That's why the act in concert to it was fast.

The ones saying that they should escape increased in numbers, and that flow increased explosively like a chain reaction across the battlefield. Mass panic had erupted.

“Flee!”

The evil spirits turned around. They shook like an ebbing tide trying to get out of the battlefield.

There were also some disturbances among the giants, and finally, some of them also started to flee.

It was a mess. As deserters started to appear in a group that numbered a hundred thousand, many were trampled to death by their own allies.

Hrumbak yelled reflexively to stop, but it was meaningless. The fear that had spread like a wild fire had long ago passed his ability to command.

“Strike them! Rip them to tears!”

Hela yelled, and Galeon transmitted the order of the queen he served to the army of the dead.

The moment the most deaths occurred wasn't when the two sides clashed against each other. It was when one side lost their will to fight and attempted to escape.

They would slash their enemies when they showed their backs. They would massacre them one-sidedly.

The army of the dead started to swallow the army of evil spirits. The twelve dragons roared once again in the air and lit up the fire even more, and the second dragon was still rolling in the battlefield even now.

'Sly bastard.'

Cuchulainn smirked and said. He'd been amazed by Tae Ho's actions with pure feelings of admiration.

The evil spirits that had said they should escape weren't real. They were fakes created through Odin's magic.

Everything was as Tae Ho had planned.

Phase two. Introduce the fake dragon. Let them recognize that the second dragon has a real body and plant a prejudice within their ranks.

Phase three. Make twelve fake dragons. The ones that'd gotten influenced by phase two could only doubt that the twelve dragons also had real bodies.

Phase four. Incite the enemies that fell into chaos. It was the same principle as a domino effect. If one pushed the first piece, the remaining ones would fall by their own accord.

The black dragon was certainly huge. It was a strong monster.

But it was impossible to defeat a hundred thousand evil spirits and six hundred giants with his own strength.

That's why he would use a tactic. He would bring a terrible chaos to the battlefield.

The twelve dragons only fluttered their wings in the sky. One

could only doubt that scene if they had a head, but there was almost no one that actually doubted it. No, in the first place, they didn't have the leisure to think.

The flow to escape has already grown too strong. It was impossible to stop the huge wave.

The army of the dead pushed back the evil spirits. It was an army that was twice as big as the evil spirits.

Finally, some deserters also appeared from the giants.

Hrumbak swung his axe and split the neck of the closest deserter. The smell of blood that spread anew made the giants at his surrounding concentrate on him, but it was only that. It was impossible to give a warning to the entire battlefield.

Hrumbak didn't get disappointed. In the first place he hadn't swung his axe for that. He had just killed a deserter.

"We will strike the black dragon."

He decided not to think in a complicated way. He would first achieve his first objective.

The dragons in the sky were fake.

He felt it would turn out well somehow if he just got rid of the black dragon that had appeared at first.

There was no logic behind it. His instincts as a warrior was yelling at him to do so, and Hrumbak decided to be loyal to his instincts.

He disturbed the flow. He ran in a straight line towards the black dragon. An overwhelming strength was put behind his huge axe.

Giant king.

His other name was Hrumbak the Striking King.

'He's coming!'

Cuchulainn warned. Tae Ho quickly moved his hands and

controlled the black dragon.

It was a battle between a monster that was a hundred meters big and a giant that was twenty meters tall.

It was the opposite situation to the more unusual fights Tae Ho was used to, and because of that, Tae Ho knew what kind of attacks would be drawn.

Hrumbak would approach him. He would stick to the body of the black dragon and pour down attacks from its blind spot.

Tae Ho first increased his speed, but Hrumbak didn't let Tae Ho go that easily. He stepped on the shoulders of the giants to take a big leap and swung his axe!

It was a strike that destroyed the ground. The black dragon flew acrobatically to dodge the attack but couldn't completely dodge it because of its huge body. The attack hit its side, and at that moment, Nidhogg let out a scream.

“It hurts! Hurts!”

The strike split the scales of the dragon and gave a wound to its flesh even though it only grazed it. It was merely a scratch, but it was different for Nidhogg. She had almost no resistance towards pain at all.

At that moment, the black dragon escaped Tae Ho's control because of its pain, and Hrumbak didn't miss that moment. He also realized in an instant that the black dragon was weak towards pain.

“Nidhogg!”

Tae Ho embraced Nidhogg and moved his hands, and Nidhogg gritted her teeth and endured the pain. She tried her best to follow Tae Ho's orders.

The black dragon fluttered its wings. It split the sky with its huge body and fired out venom.

Hrumbak moved quickly. He didn't care about the giants and evil spirits that died because of the venom. He was now closer to a hunter rather than a king.

He would grab the tail and get on top of it somehow.

The underlings of Hrumbak also joined him in doing the same. They fired attacks or threw weapons and attacked the black dragon.

Most of the attacks couldn't pierce the scales, but there were some that gave it wounds.

Nidhogg bit her lips with a teary face. It was because she realized that she would make things difficult for Tae Ho if she struggled because of the pain. She tried her best to endure it somehow.

Tae Ho moved his hands hastily. He had to face the giants while minimizing the damages Nidhogg suffered, and so he needed movements that were frequently used in a shooting game.

The venom melted the giants.

The strike of Hrumbak tore up the scales of the dragon once more.

The ground shook. The tail the black dragon swung to crush the ground became an overwhelming hail and swept up the giants and evil spirits.

But Hrumbak didn't care at all. He rather siezed the opportunity when the black dragon used a big movement to close the distance. He tried to inflict a fatal blow while using the blind spot created by the difference in size.

Venom covered the battlefield once again. The black dragon flew up with its big wings, and Hrumbak surged up as if chasing it back. He finally managed to grab its tail.

'He's coming!'

Cuchulainn yelled. At that moment, the black dragon shook its

tail rashly, but Hrumbak didn't let go of its tail. He rather swung the axe he was holding and stuck it in the tail of the dragon.

“Kyaak!”

Nidhogg couldn't endure it this time. She threw a tantrum while crying once again.

Hrumbak poured out magic power in his axe. He was planning on making the black dragon, that was weak towards pain, crash into the ground.

Tae Ho embraced Nidhogg strongly so that she could calm herself down. He activated the 'One that Controls Dragons' and forcefully blocked her pain. The dragon landed down like Hrumbak had wanted, and at the same time, it turned its body. It used all of its body to execute a strong tail sweep.

Hrumbak also couldn't endure it this time. He got thrown away along with his axe and rolled across the ground as a mess.

Corpses were now filling the ground, and it was colored in red because of the overwhelming amount of blood that had been shed.

Hrumbak smiled creepily even after having sustained injuries from his tumbling and rose up as Tae Ho manipulated the black dragon and glared at Hrumbak.

Tae Ho wasn't thinking of fleeing at all. It wasn't his pride as a warrior. If the black dragon escaped now, Hrumbak would move to massacre Hela and the members of Niflheim without a doubt. In addition, the escape of the black dragon would turn around the situation once more.

“I will endure it even if it hurts. I can do it. I won't obstruct you.”

Nidhogg said while crying while squeezing out her voice, and Tae Ho embraced her once again. He made the black dragon charge at the same time as Hrumbak roared.

The battlefield that could hold a huge army numbering 300,000 was overwhelmingly large.

Hela looked at the battlefield on top of the ghost horse. There were several different battles occurring in the battlefield.

The evil spirits that were fleeing and the dead spirits that chased after them.

The black dragon rolling in the ground and the black dragons that were at the sky.

And another black dragon and the giant king that were fighting fiercely while making the ground and sky shake as if they were excluded from everyone.

Hela didn't know what or who the black dragon was, but she could only think of it as an ally by now.

She had to help the black dragon. They had to defeat the giant king together.

But Hela wasn't proficient in battle. It was meaningless even if she joined in the fight with her army.

Hela gulped dry saliva. She breathed roughly and placed her hand on her chest.

But it was at that moment—

There was something flying towards her. It melted in with the surroundings really well as if it was an accessory from the battlefield. It took a place on Hela's shoulder really naturally.

‘Hela.’

Hela turned to look at her shoulder in shock. There was a crow perched upon it, and the voice it emitted certainly belonged to Odin.

“Odin!”

Hela yelled in joy unconsciously. It was obvious, as Odin, who

was supposed to be dead, had returned.

Odin smiled bitterly at Hela welcoming his return. He erased the small doubt he had and said quickly.

‘There’s no time. We have to help Nidhogg.’

Hela opened her eyes widely at the word ‘Nidhogg’.

The black dragon, Nidhogg.

Hela also knew of it. It was because of the stories the God of Fire and Lies, Loki, her father, had told her.

The black dragon living in the roots of the World Tree.

The evil existence that would one day fire venom that would destroy the world.

Hela gulped dry saliva. The intelligent Hela waited for Odin to keep speaking instead of asking what had happened. The black dragon had already sided with them and was currently fighting for them. As Odin had said that they should help Nidhogg, she erased all the useless doubts and had to first follow his orders.

Odin thought that Hela was really commendable for that. He spoke to her, who had all of the ambition of a girl, the patience of a woman, and the wisdom of an elder.

‘Hela. You brought that, right?’

“It’s in my embrace.”

Hela answered immediately. Odin had said ‘that’, but it was really clear as to what he was talking about.

‘That’ was a cursed object.

A crystal of terrible evil that couldn’t be stored in the holy Asgard at all and had to be hidden in the cold depths of Niflheim.

But they needed it right now. They couldn’t not use the power of a curse that could even change the fates of Gods to stop the World Wolf and the Magician King.

The thing that Hela was holding.

The cursed weapon Odin had told her to protect himself.

Hela clenched her chest and then took out the item she was hiding inside her body.

Odin gulped the silence. The item that was dyed with the blood of Baldr and was planned to be passed down along with the seat of the King of Gods to his most loved son.

But it wasn't the moment to waste time. Odin whispered to Hela once again,

‘Idun’s warrior is inside the black dragon. Transmit that to him and defeat the giant king together.’

The mistletoe branch.

Mistilteinn, the God-killing spear.

Hela nodded. She gulped some saliva while looking at the clash between the giant king and the dragon but then threw away her hesitation. She threw her ghost horse into a full sprint.

< Episode 39 – Hela (5) > End

Episode 39/Chapter 6: Hela (6)

‘Stay calm. The damages aren’t big,’

Cuchulainn said.

And it was just like he said.

Nidhogg didn’t suffer any big wounds until now. Excluding the deep wound inflicted in her tail, one could say that all the others were superficial.

They were minor injuries that a normal warrior would have ignored and fought on with, and if the warrior was one of Valhalla, they were wounds one couldn’t even feel.

‘She will need training.’

They could solve her battle prowess to some extent thanks to Tae Ho’s control, but he couldn’t overcome the resistance she had towards pain.

Nidhogg heard the words Cuchulainn had said to himself and then lowered her head and gritted her teeth. She made a resolution to endure the small wounds however she could.

Tae Ho had read her thoughts directly thanks to the ‘One that Controls Dragons’.

“It’s not your fault.”

She was already doing her best, and she had actually already defeated thousands of evil spirits and hundreds of giants. She was the one that had started the flow in which the army of the evil spirits started to flee. If Tae Ho had been alone, he wouldn’t have been able to make this flow.

And Cuchulainn agreed on that point. He checked the surroundings and said quickly,

‘He’s Hrumbak the Striking King. He’s one of the giant kings that had spread his name far and wide even during the Great War.’

He wasn't a sort of underling at all. He was an enemy they couldn't lower their guards on.

Tae Ho took a breath. He placed his hands on the keyboard and mouse softly as if embracing Nidhogg.

Odin had told him about the trump card Hela had, but Tae Ho didn't think about it.

He was thinking of winning this war only with Nidhogg's and his strength.

He would grant a complete victory to Nidhogg.

That wasn't impossible nor arrogance.

They could do it.

They could win.

Bang!

A loud explosion resonated out. It had been made by Hrumbak. He kicked the ground roughly and sped forwards at lightning speed. The axe he swung expanded twice its size and covered the black dragon.

Tae Ho focused his attention. He wasn't planning on letting it graze her.

He would dodge it perfectly and would create a means to escape by the attacks that would follow back.

The attack tore the ground. The black dragon that was a hundred meters in size drew a beautiful trajectory and dodged Hrumbak's attack like in a picturesque scene.

There were remnants of green venom left in the spot the dragon passed through, and Hrumbak, who followed through it after slicing the air, cursed out inside the thin, toxic cloud. Still, he endured it with his strong body of a giant king and magic power.

Tae Ho made the black dragon turn high in the sky and checked

all the stats of Nidhogg through the 'Legendary Pro Gamer'. He also looked at Hrumbak's state with his strengthened 'Eyes of the Dragon'.

He would go.

Tae Ho's fingers danced on top of the keyboard and then the black dragon spread all of its four pair of wings and charged towards Hrumbak.

Hrumbak smiled in joy. Rather than stepping back while facing the dragon that was ten times bigger than he was, he chose to raise his axe.

Kwagagagagak!

Right at that moment, another sound was heard from somewhere else, and Hrumbak could only turn to look as that sound was getting closer.

It was the second black dragon. The dragon that had been rolling in the battlefield and crushing the evil spirits was now rolling towards them!

That was the reason Tae Ho's fingers had gotten faster.

Even if Nidhogg's affection towards Tae Ho was strong, the time they had to bless and receive blessings lacked absolutely. That was why the fake Nidhogg Tae Ho created could only do simple and restricted movements. Having recreated a body that was a hundred meters big was close to a miracle.

Tae Ho manipulated that fake Nidhogg. Both dragons charged towards Hrumbak recklessly from above and from the side.

Hrumbak had to choose one alternative at the two attacks that were approaching from two different sides, and at that moment, he also followed his instincts. Rather than going for the fake Nidhogg, he chose to solely concentrate on the black dragon that was in the sky.

Hrumbak hurriedly kicked the ground and jumped up. He fired all the strength he had stored to the dragon in the sky.

It was strong. It was an attack that could be said to be one suitable for the Striking King.

His movements satisfied Tae Ho. Hrumbak was moving as he had thought.

[Strengthened saga: The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

Tae Ho activated his saga, but this time, it wasn't to make a fake one.

The effects of the 'Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him'.

It wasn't only effective in making copies. It also had the function to summon the real Valkyries to his side just as it had been revealed in Vanaheim.

But Tae Ho wasn't content with only that. He pondered the notion that he could call the real ones.

If he could call the real one, wouldn't he also be able to do the opposite?

The black dragon didn't close its eyes. It faced the attack coming from the front head on.

Chwaaaaaaaak!

The attack split the ground and only sliced the empty air.

Hrumbak opened his eyes widely and then realized what was wrong.

The fake Nidhogg.

The fake dragon that was located below Hrumbak after he'd leapt up was still rolling over the ground.

It wasn't a fake anymore. The fake disappeared, and the real one appeared in its place.

Hrumbak turned his head in the air, but when he did, it was

already late.

The black dragon spat out venom.

They were close, and in addition, they were in the air. Hrumbak had dodged all direct hits until now, but he couldn't do anything about this one.

The venom covered Hrumbak, and the nasty poison changed the color of the sky.

Hrumbak did his best. He covered his body with magic power, and at the same time, blocked the venom with his axe.

It was an axe that was refined with the frost of Jotunheim for more than a hundred years. It could somehow maintain its shape even after being hit with the venom of the black dragon.

Hrumbak kept releasing magic power without pause. He pressed himself down with a huge amount of magic power to dodge the venom, and he crashed into the ground below after a fierce, vertical plummet.

And then, the tail of the black dragon swept through Hrumbak.

It was an attack that had been prepared beforehand. There weren't many options Hrumbak could utilize now that he was exposed to the venom.

A strong attack utilizing the weight of a body that was a hundred meters big.

A blunt shock that defied imagination hit Hrumbak, and as it was an unexpected attack, he received a proper and direct hit.

He could only throw himself in the direction of its trajectory as the attack reached him. There was nothing else he could do.

Hrumbak flew across the battlefield in a second and only slid to a stop after he'd been thrown away over a hundred meters.

The damage was too massive. Hrumbak could feel how the warriors of Valhalla he had fought until now felt.

A battle against a foe where one couldn't allow even a single attack to hit them.

Hrumbak gritted his teeth and stood up. He activated his regenerative powers while feeling drowsy.

And he vomited out black blood.

The blood didn't stop flowing.

The venom of the black dragon, Nidhogg.

It wasn't the real body, and because of that, its power also wasn't comparable to the real thing.

Still, Hrumbak had swallowed too much of the venom. His thought that his decision to fight Nidhogg in close range was correct, but if he got by the dragon, he'd unavoidably be placed in direct proximity to the poisonous gas surrounding Nidhogg.

The venom that poured down right in front of him was the decisive blow. The poison that had been accumulating in Hrumbak's body finally crossed the threshold of his control.

Hrumbak vomited out blood once again and then raised his head. He saw a black dragon that had approached him through his dim vision.

The black dragon opened its mouth and fired out venom once again. It could bite and crush him to death, but it didn't choose to do that. It was to evade the possible scenario where Hrumbak would attack the insides of the mouth of the dragon or its eyes as his will to live took over his actions.

Hrumbak squeezed out the last of his strength. He prepared to jump over the venom, but the tail of the dragon swept over him once again.

It was also a prepared card this time. (ED note: I read this as 'prepaid card'. Anyone else?)

If the first attack was a sweep of the tail then this time it was a

slamming down of it.

Hrumbak was thrown away diagonally, and when he landed, it made a sound akin to a meteor's impact. The ground shook as if it was being split during the occurrence of an earthquake.

The black dragon spread its wings.

And then surged up into the sky like nothing.

Hrumbak, who'd been wedged into the ground, vomited out black blood and looked at that black dragon. He understood instinctively what the dragon was planning to do.

And because of that, he ended up laughing unconsciously. He cursed out inwardly, saying that he was a sly bastard.

The thing falling down the sky.

An arrow of disaster that reached a hundred meters.

[Saga: Catapult of the Dragon] (TL: Changed from 'Roar of the Dragon'. It's the same saga.)

Draconic Ballista.

It fell down at a stupendous speed. It was a move aimed at bringing destruction not only to Hrumbak but to everyone on the battlefield.

From everywhere, participants of both sides looked at the sky.

The ones that were fighting and escaping all stopped and looked.

Phase five.

The last phase.

The black dragon flew roughly before reaching the ground. It flew up towards the sky like a bird that had caught its prey.

And right at that moment, when the trajectory of the dragon changed—

The chest of the black dragon opened up, and someone fell down

towards the ground.

[Saga: Idun's Warrior]

The momentum of the Draconic Ballista was still left in Tae Ho's body. He drew a new trajectory with the 'Charge of the Warrior' and concentrated all his strength on the weapon he was grabbing with his right hand.

The Spear of Passion.

The weapon that converted magic power and several other qualities into destructive power.

Tae Ho threw the Spear of Passion towards Hrumbak, and the spear that was shining with Idun's golden power pierced Hrumbak's chest. It then exploded and destroyed his heart!

But it didn't end there. As Hrumbak's chest also exploded, there was a bigger explosion deeper in the ground.

Tae Ho surged up towards the sky. It wasn't the strength of the 'Charge of the Warrior'. The black dragon, Nidhogg, was using all of her strong magic power to pull Tae Ho up.

Nidhogg struggled while having her hands on the mouse and keyboard.

There was no need for her to use it, but Cuchulainn just smiled with a satisfied face as it rather suited her.

Tae Ho kicked in the air to return to Nidhogg. He then looked down over and across the battlefield.

A great amount of runes surged up from the corpse of Hrumbak and flew towards Tae Ho and Nidhogg. It was a pure white light that didn't seem to suit Hrumbak's person.

Tae Ho put a smile and then decided to play his last card loyally like always.

The mystical magic he'd learned from Adenmaha.

Tae Ho's identity.

The shape of a huge apple tree appeared with Tae Ho at its center. The tree, bathed in golden light, surged up in the middle of the battlefield like the World Tree and attracted the attention of everyone.

Idun's warrior.

The giants and evil spirits lost their will completely.

Opposingly, the army of the dead started to yell heatedly. Their cries soon united and shook the entire battlefield.

"Idun's warrior!"

"For Idun.

"For Heda."

Tae Ho mumbled in a low voice and then returned to Nidhogg in the heart room where he no longer knew what to do with the mouse and keyboard.

Elsewhere, Hela, who had seen the entire battle from a distant place, looked down at Misteltein that was in her hands unconsciously.

The God-killing spear that couldn't be compared to anything.

'Save it for now,'

Odin said. Hela looked at her surroundings with an awkward face and then cleared her throat before putting the spear back inside of her.

< Episode 39 – Hela (6) > End

Episode 39/Chapter 7: Hela (7)

Tae Ho had defeated Hrumbak the Striking King and even made a performance to spread the name of Idun, but the battle hadn't ended yet.

It was because the number of forces the two sides had was too big in the first place.

The giants and evil spirits all chose to escape. As they were already in a situation where the commanding system had broken down, they were escaping desperately and in a mess.

Someone wise had said once that retreating in a battle was the most difficult thing.

It was because they had to stop the chase of the enemy that had gained the momentum and had to manage the forces.

But that wasn't possible as the commanding system had disappeared.

The army of the dead swung their swords without hesitation towards the escaping evil spirits, and a one sided massacre occurred in the battlefield.

The evil spirits didn't stop to live. They stepped on their allies that had fallen without hesitation. There were even some that pushed the ones that were running next to them to try to buy time for themselves.

And it wasn't different for the giants. Several evil spirits got crushed to death under the giants' huge feet.

Tae Ho looked at the battlefield while sitting on the chair in the insides of the black dragon. It seemed like he wouldn't need to fight head on because the battle had already tilted to their favor.

Because of that, Tae Ho put off his hands from Nidhogg's mouse and keyboard and said, "Nidhogg."

“Yes, Tae Ho master?”

Nidhogg, who was staring at the monitor, answered. The monitor, that was identical to the one Tae Ho had used before he died, was showing the scene from the battlefield.

Tae Ho put his body back consciously and said,

“Do you want to try fighting?”

“M-Me?”

Nidhogg got surprised and hurriedly turned her body to Tae Ho’s side. Tae Ho laughed at her expression filled with uneasiness and excitement and nodded.

“Yes, there’s no need to fight earnestly. Just move while trying to make them feel fear.”

“Ah, okay. I will try.”

Nidhogg needed training at least for a later time. It wouldn’t even be dangerous now that they’d gained the advantage, so it was the best chance to make Nidhogg experience the air of the battlefield and move by herself.

Nidhogg answered firmly and then placed her hands on the mouse and keyboard. She struggled with her awkward hand movements manipulated the tools.

But of course, it wasn’t efficient at all as Nidhogg didn’t need those controls in the first place. The mouse and the keyboard were just adorning tools for her, someone who could control the black dragon with just her thoughts.

Because of that, Tae Ho was planning on stopping her, but Cuchulainn, who’d guessed his thoughts quickly, suddenly said, ‘Just leave her be.’

‘Yes? Why?’

‘That’s more cute.’

Cuchulainn spoke as if it was obvious.

Nidhogg was already cute, but now that she was struggling after saying that she wanted to use the keyboard and mouse she couldn't use well, she looked even more cute.

‘She really is cute indeed.’

Cuchulainn nodded and repeated himself, but Tae Ho's eyes were already cold.

“Uh....it's hard to move.”

Nidhogg let out a frustrated groan at the right moment. She was cute just like Cuchulainn had said, but he couldn't just let her undergo a non-efficient training session.

Tae Ho naturally pulled on her arms and made her take her hands off the keyboard and mouse.

“Tae Ho master?”

Nidhogg blinked and asked, and Tae Ho smiled warmly and explained.

“Nidhogg, this is your body, right? Do it naturally like you always did. Nidhogg has Nidhogg's methods. There's no need to imitate me.”

“I understand. I will do as Tae Ho master says.”

Nidhogg nodded firmly this time too and then closed her eyes after leaning her head on Tae Ho's back.

She started to control the black dragon just like she did when she'd first met Tae Ho.

And the movements of the dragon certainly improved.

Tae Ho looked up the ceiling checking how Nidhogg was doing and then said inwardly, ‘Cuchulainn.’

‘Why are you calling me?’

‘Idun-nim would be doing well, right? Heda too?’

It seemed like he remembered the two people after making the golden apple tree. He missed them a lot.

His chest felt heavy at the truth that he couldn't connect with Idun even when he used 'Idun's Warrior'.

Cuchulainn let out a long sigh and then put on his usual fresh expression.

'She should be fine, and Heda will also be healthy. I mean, the two of them are in Valhalla. Master Scathach should also be safe.'

Cuchulainn also missed Scathach. He wanted to see that she was safe with his own two eyes.

But he had to endure it for now. He had realized in the Great War that nothing good would come by feeling anxious.

Tae Ho could feel how Cuchulainn was feeling. He dropped his stiff shoulders a bit and then said, 'Adenmaha, Siri, and Bracky are also fine, right? Ingrid and Rasgrid.....Reginleif, Gandur, Kaldea, and Hildegard.....Sigrun and Gudrun also preoccupied me. It's the same for Helga. I wonder if Freya-nim is doing well..... Rolo and McLaren should also be fine.'

'Hey.'

'Yes?'

'Speak one name at a time. One at a time. Why do you have so many people to worry about?'

There was no end as he kept listening to Tae Ho's words.

Tae Ho shook his head and answered,

'It's not proper to only worry about Idun-nim, Heda, and Adenmaha. If I use your terms, it's like I'm acting like trash?'

'You are trash. And you aren't worried about Ragnar and Merlin at all? Thinking about it, you only named girls except for Bracky. You really are a bad guy.'

‘Well, Master Ragnar is an exception. I’m sure he will be fine, and I would have certainly named Merlin if only you didn’t interrupt me.’

‘Sure you would have.’

‘And are you ignoring Rolo and McLaren? They are also guys.’

‘Not guys, but male.’

The both of them were saying nonsense mixed with jokes.

Some time passed after the two of them were speaking. Nidhogg then called Tae Ho.

“Tae Ho master?”

“Huh?”

“This crow is speaking like Odin-nim. It’s whispering to me that it wants to speak with you.”

It seemed like it was speaking outside of the black dragon.

“Nidhogg, wait a moment.”

Tae Ho placed his hands on the mouse and keyboard once more and then activated the ‘One that Controls Dragons’. When Nidhogg flinched and let out a short groan, Tae Ho became a black dragon once again and could sense his surroundings.

‘Idun’s warrior, can you hear me?’

It was Odin’s voice just like Nidhogg had said. Tae Ho answered inwardly just like when he spoke to Cuchulainn.

‘I hear you well.’

‘Right, listen to what I say from now on well. We have already gained the momentum. The evil spirits that had their command system destroyed won’t be able to group up, so they won’t be as threatening from now on. But it’s different for the giants. We can’t let even one of them leave. Go ahead and destroy their escape path. I will show you the direction so don’t resist my magic.’

Tae Ho received Odin's magic power without resistance just like when he'd received the runes from him. Then, an arrow indicating the direction he had to go and a huge teleportation gate appeared.

'You have raised great merits in this battle. I will entrust you with the final touch.'

'I will be back.'

The connection with Odin was cut off. Tae Ho let out a long sigh and then grabbed his mouse.

"Let's go, Nidhogg."

"Yes, Tae Ho master."

Nidhogg smiled brightly and then buried her back on Tae Ho's chest once again.

A black dragon started to fly towards the giants with its four wings spread.

—

Hela saw the black dragon flying like an arrow from her ghost horse and let out an exclamation.

"To tame the black dragon, Nidhogg. He's really impressive."

'That's right, he's an amazing guy.'

Not even Odin had imagined a situation like this one.

Having turned the ancient dragon into their ally was solely Tae Ho's merit.

And due to that several things had changed.

If they didn't have Nidhogg, they wouldn't have been able to finish this battle this easily.

There would have been many more deaths than now, and perhaps, they wouldn't have been able to defeat Hrumbak the Striking King either.

The black dragon, Nidhogg.

The ancient dragon that has existed since the World Tree grew.

Although it had to leave behind its true body back in the roots, it was still quite useful. If they did well, they may be able to defeat even the World Wolf.

As Odin fell in his thoughts for a moment, Hela opened her mouth carefully. It seemed like she was worried about him.

“Odin, are you in a distant place?”

‘I’m riding on Ratatoskr and heading to the battlefield. I will arrive soon.’

“I’m really glad you are safe.”

‘It’s thanks to Idun’s warrior.....and Loki.’

If the two of them hadn’t been there, Odin would have died without being able to do anything.

“Father really is.....”

‘Not yet, he may be alive. Even I, that got eaten by the World Wolf, am alive. And.....’

Odin paused for a moment. Loki was someone that had acted as a double agent while taking in all the criticisms and insults from Asgard for more than a hundred years.

But regardless of that, he had never complained once. He had never forgotten his loyalty towards Asgard even once.

Odin felt that he was in great debt to him. He had a lot of things he received from him.

‘I still couldn’t repay all my debts towards him. That’s why I can’t allow him dying on me. I won’t allow it.’

It seemed like he was forcing those words, but Hela put on a small smile. It was because she felt that Odin really cared for Loki.

The crow that was sitting in Hela’s shoulder twisted its beak. It

flew up and said, ‘I will go soon. Idun’s warrior will also return soon, so let’s raise a toast for victory.’

“I will prepare a good wine.”

The crow flew away completely. Hela looked at the crow for a moment and then turned to face her surroundings once again. The army of the dead was cheering and marching.

—

The battle came to an end when night found Niflheim.

Niflheim was a world that’s sun didn’t rise, but morning and night still existed.

Night was much darker than the afternoon, and the cold also got stronger.

Because of that, Tae Ho could only arrive Helheim, the residence of Hela, after being led by a crow, Odin’s incarnation.

Odin and Hela were waiting for him as they arrived in the garden early.

Nidhogg looked at her surroundings in glee. It was the first time in her life that she’d ever seen flowers, and fortunately, she didn’t trip as Tae Ho was holding her tightly.

Hela put on a gentle smile and welcomed Tae Ho and Nidhogg. Odin, who was covering himself with a grey cape, introduced Tae Ho and Nidhogg to Hela.

“Idun’s warrior, this is Hela. She’s the queen that reigns over the dead ones that came to Niflheim.”

“Idun’s warrior, Lee Tae Ho, greets the queen of Helheim.”

Tae Ho lowered his posture and showed etiquette just like he did when he met Freya for the first time.

Hela was the Goddess of the underworld, so just by looking at her rank, she wasn’t below Idun at all.

It seemed like Hela liked Tae Ho express etiquette towards her, and she put on an even gentler smile. She radiated the energy of a youthful girl and greeted Tae Ho with a beautiful voice.

“Nice to meet you. I have seen your performance well. I thank you for coming at the right moment while representing all of Niflheim.”

That wasn't merely a word of thanks. Tae Ho could feel Hela's sincere feelings.

“This is Nidhogg. My precious comrade.”

“I'm Nidhogg.”

Nidhogg, who was hiding behind Tae Ho, imitated Tae Ho and expressed an awkward etiquette.

It seemed like Hela had heard something from Odin beforehand, so she looked at her with the gentle eyes of those looking at a kid.

“Nice to meet you Nidhogg. I'm Hela.”

Hela also lowered her posture and put herself on the same level as Nidhogg. Nidhogg put on a bright smile at Hela's attitude that was as kind as Tae Ho's and Odin's. It seemed like she'd been afraid that Hela would have treated her like Ratatoskr.

“This is Galeon. He's my advisor and the strongest warrior of Niflheim.”

“Greetings to the commander of Idun.”

Galeon, who was at Hela's side, placed his hand on his chest and expressed etiquette. He hadn't been able to enter Valhalla, but he was still receiving the benefits from the rune system.

‘It seems like he's in the upper ranks even among the intermediate warriors.’

Tae Ho agreed to Cuchulainn's short opinion and also showed etiquette.

“Nice to meet you. May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

There was no way their faces contorted as they were showing etiquette towards each other. Odin raised his cup while everyone was putting on good expressions.

“We finished introducing ourselves, so let’s first raise a toast.”

Hela began to serve alcohol at Odin’s words. Tae Ho pondered if he ought to give a cup to Nidhogg as well, but he decided to let it go this time. It was only one cup, and Nidhogg also had the right to have a toast.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

Everyone cheered at Odin’s initiation. The honey alcohol that was slightly frozen in the exterior was really fresh and sweet.

“We-Weird!”

But this was still unfamiliar alcohol for Nidhogg. Even if it was a sweet honey alcohol, it was still alcohol in the end.

Cuchulainn looked at Nidhogg tilt her head with gratified eyes and then Odin called Tae Ho and Hela.

“Idun’s warrior, and Hela.”

“Yes Odin.”

“The battle has just ended, but we don’t have time to waste. We have to move on to the next level immediately.”

Hrumbak had died and the giants had been exterminated. As the army of evil spirits had also been broken into fragments, there would be no danger for now.

That’s why this was the best opportunity. They had to leave Niflheim and extend their hands to Midgard.

“I will go to Midgard and gather the warriors that were scattered. Hela, you should gather the army of the dead and prepare to march

to Asgard.”

“I will obey your wish.”

“Idun’s warrior, will you go to Midgard with me?”

“That’s what I hoped.”

Hela and Tae Ho spoke as smoothly as a current of water. Odin nodded and then called for Nidhogg that was still drinking from her cup carefully.

“Nidhogg.”

“Hm?”

“You should remain here.”

Nidhogg blinked at Odin’s calm words. And then she dropped her cup in a surprise.

“Yo-You don’t need Nidhogg? She’s useless?”

Fear filled the big, black eyes of Nidhogg. Odin hurriedly shook his head and said, “That’s not the case. Your body is too big to go to Midgard.”

“I....I’m fat?”

Nidhogg turned to look at herself. Odin let out a hearty laughter at the absurdity, but Nidhogg was serious. That’s why he also had to talk to her in a serious tone.

“That’s not it. Listen well to what I’m going to say.”

He wasn’t only speaking for Nidhogg but also to Tae Ho. Odin looked up at the ceiling and said, “We have installed doors we can open at will in the new Great Barrier of Asgard. It was to stop the inevitable creation of holes and to dispatch warriors more efficiently.”

It was impossible to perfectly cover Midgard with the Great Barrier.

Because of that, Odin had decided to make openings that would

unavoidably be created. If it was compared to a house, he had installed windows for ventilation.

“But we limited it to the size of a human to stop the giants from using it.”

You didn’t know about small giants like Sigil, but at least, normal giants wouldn’t be able to pass through it.

“It’s fine if it’s only the essence of Nidhogg, but she’d have to leave behind her real body.”

Nidhogg without her body was more of a luggage for them.

It was because there was nothing she could do as she didn’t know how to fight nor use magic.

“Tae Ho master.”

Nidhogg pulled on Tae Ho’s arm. She said in a low and dispirited voice, “I still want to go with you. Can I?”

Her face was saying that she didn’t want to get left behind alone, but she also didn’t want to be a bother for them. Tae Ho stroke her head.

“Let’s go together. I will protect you safely even if you don’t have your body.”

It was the same word he used on Adenmaha.

And the reaction of Nidhogg was the same as Adenmaha’s but much more sincere.

“I really like Tae Ho master!”

Nidhogg embraced Tae Ho tightly. As Tae Ho patted her back as if he couldn’t do anything about it, Cuchulainn spoke with a saddened voice.

“Ahh, I just hate to see a young sheep fall to the hands of a devil. It really pains me.”

Those were words of Cuchulainn that could just be ignored.

Odin laughed soundlessly.

“Idun’s warrior, I won’t hold you back if you decided on it. Protect Nidhogg well.”

“I will do so.”

“Hela.”

“Yes, Odin?”

The flow of the conversation changed to Hela. Odin first took out a small stick he had given Tae Ho previously and gave it to Hela.

“It’s a device that can control the rune of obedience that’s engraved in Ratatoskr. Observe it and discipline it well so that it can’t think of other things. I will also entrust Nidhogg’s body to you.”

“I will do so.”

Odin had firmly warned Hela about Ratatoskr before Tae Ho’s arrival to this place as she was gentle by nature. If she didn’t uselessly give compassion to Ratatoskr, she wouldn’t get swept by his selfish motives.

“My cup is empty. This means that it really is time to leave.”

Odin raised his cup. He stopped Hela trying to fill his cup and opened his mouth.

“Hela, I’m grateful towards your unchanging loyalty towards Asgard. As you are Loki’s daughter, you are also like my daughter.”

Odin slowly opened his arms. Hela understood the meaning behind that, and she embraced Odin like a father and daughter sharing affection.

Odin gave a blessing to Hela’s forehead and waited for the cups of the others to get filled. He raised his cup and said once again, “Let’s go to Midgard. To gather the warriors of Valhalla in one place.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

The cups were quickly emptied once again. Odin greeted Hela with his eyes and then opened a space door in the middle of the garden. It was a passageway he had prepared beforehand that connected to Midgard.

Odin took the lead and Tae Ho followed closely behind while taking Nidhogg by her hand as she was waving towards Hela.

Hela, after sending away the three people, let out a long sigh. She slowly pressed down her chest.

It wasn't because of Mistilteinn that Odin has said to save it until the time came.

What popped up in Hela's head wasn't Odin's warning but the words of Skuld, the youngest of the three sisters.

‘The one that is connected to you by fate still hasn't arrived in Asgard. Your fate is connected to the future.’

Her heart beat faintly.

Perhaps, she may have inadvertently drawn closer to the future Skuld had talked about.

And it was merely a guess, but she may have faced her fate that would come true in the future.

It wasn't about the fate she would have with her lover. It was a fate that was related to all of Asgard just like the second child Jormungand or the first child Fenrir were.

Hela let out a long sigh once again. The space door Odin summoned had already closed.

Midgard and Asgard.

Hela raised her head and looked up the sky. She clenched a fist and lightly hit her chest twice.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

The etiquette of Asgard she learned from her father, Loki, when she was really young.

Hela turned around. She started to make preparations to fight once again for her father.

< Episode 39 – Hela (7) > End

Episode 40/Chapter 1: Idun's Valkyrie (1)

Long ago, when the Great War was about to end–

The spinning wheel that was at the center of the residence of the three sisters started to spin.

The finely made threads of fate let them take a peek at the fate of the world.

Uld, who grabbed at the thread with her long and slender fingers, had said, “The fates of the three children of Loki are connected to the ones that will decide the fate of Asgard.”

Verdandi nodded while making a new thread and read it down. The fate of the World Wolf was connected to the fate of the King of Gods, Odin.

The fate of the Space Snake, Jormungand, was connected with the strongest God, Thor.

Skuld frowned.

No matter how she looked at it, it wasn't good.

Cases like these, where the fates of different people were connected to each other, happened occasionally.

It was easy to think about the connection a couple had, but there were much more different cases than that. And if it was a destiny that the thread of fate showed, then it certainly wouldn't be normal.

A best friend, a nasty foe, someone living a similar life, a relationship that changes when they meet each other, an existence that can become a milestone for another, etcetera.

But the ties that the children of Loki had with the Gods of Asgard were the worst of the worst.

Mortal enemies, and in a one-sided way.

The World Wolf was Odin's doom. It was a terrible existence that could turn Odin into dog food.

And the Space Snake was the doom for Thor. Thor had a strong vitality that could defeat all kinds of giants and monsters and was resistant to all kinds of poisons, but he couldn't endure the poison of the Space Snake.

Odin and Thor were both important existences for Asgard. As they were the King of Gods and the strongest God, respectively, if either one of them disappeared, Asgard could be stumbled by the threat the giants posed.

"Loki's last child."

Uld said. And Verdandi read the thread of fate once again.

Hela was also connected with someone from Asgard. But it wasn't possible to know with who.

"He still hasn't arrived. He will come in the future."

It was Skuld's area, but even she couldn't grasp who was connected by fate with Hela.

She couldn't know what kind of fate it would be as she didn't even know the adversary. Not even Uld, who had read the threads of fate for a long time, knew. She could barely read that it was only a different kind of fate.

But she was certain of one thing aside of that.

"The one that's connected by fate with Hela will decide the future of Asgard."

Just like Odin and Thor did.

Uld grabbed the thread of fate. Verdandi raised her head and looked at Skuld.

Skuld received the gazes of her sisters and changed her point of view.

She saw beyond the concept that the World Wolf and the Space Snake were enemies and the Queen of the Dead was an ally and looked at the line above that.

The children of Loki were telling them.

The ones that would decide the fate of Asgard.

The King of Gods, Odin, was the past of Asgard.

The God of Thunder was Asgard's present.

What Hela pointed at was the future of Asgard. The existence that would bring forth the future.

The one that hadn't arrived yet.

But the one that will one day arrive.

Skuld untied the threads of fate like she always did.

Uld spun the spinning wheel once again and slowly made a new thread of fate.

—

“We arrived.”

Tae Ho got a hold of himself when Odin called for him with a low voice. He saw a green hill in front of him when he opened his eyes.

“We are at a place not too far away from the lake of Elidi.”

Odin wore a long hat and a cape. A flock of crows were flying towards him as if welcoming him.

“The air here is good. It's fresh,”

Nidhogg sniffed and said. The air here couldn't be compared to the roots that was covered by a dense fog and the poisonous fog she made.

Tae Ho stroked her head and then looked at his surroundings. He had spent some time in this place when he last visited Midgard, but it was merely that so he couldn't quite pinpoint where he was at.

‘Odin should know the path if that’s what you are thinking about.’

Odin was also the God of the Wanderers. Because of that, he could know all of the paths of Midgard as if they were lines in the palm of his hand.

In addition, a flock of crows was approaching. They would transmit the information they had to Odin.

Tae Ho wasn’t the one that should have been thinking about where they should go or where they were at just like Cuchulainn had said. Because of that, Tae Ho thought about a problem he could solve himself.

“Good, I have decided.”

“What?”

Nidhogg tilted her head and asked. Tae Ho smiled towards her instead of answering and then took out a summoning rock.

He would summon Adenmaha.

It was impossible to do that when he was at the roots because of the severance.

He hadn’t summoned her since he got out of the roots because he’d thought that she would be in Valhalla, but that wasn’t something he could be sure of. He would be able to summon Adenmaha if she remained in Midgard just like the warriors that couldn’t leave it.

‘What if she’s taking a shower?’

Cuchulainn laughed creepily, and Tae Ho shook his head. But still, his worry about the summoning not working was solved to an extent. Cuchulainn would have also probably said it to ease his nervousness.

‘I’m looking forward to it. Do it quickly. She would have finished clothing herself at this pace.’

Cuchulainn breathed out from his nose and said. It was sincerity itself.

‘H-He should be joking. He should have joked to make me feel more relaxed.’

Tae Ho consoled himself and then took a deep breath and inserted magic power to his summoning rock. He then called the name he grieved with a trembling voice.

“Adenmaha.”

Someone responded to his call. Adenmaha appeared while washing herself and showing her white skin as the space folded around her.

Exactly one second after–

Adenmaha blinked.

And after another second–

“Kyaak?!”

Adenmaha screamed, and Cuchulainn cheered.

‘Ohh! It was real!’

He had just said it casually, but for her to really be showering....

Tae Ho was horrified while Cuchulainn felt joy, and Adenmaha felt even more perplexed at the fact that she had gotten summoned.

“Ma...Master?!”

Adenmaha looked at Tae Ho and opened her eyes widely. She closed her eyes and then tears started to fall down from her eyes.

“Master!”

Adenmaha threw herself towards Tae Ho. She grabbed him by his neck and burst out of laughter.

“W-Wait! Clothes! Wear some clothes first!”

“Uwaa! Master!”

But Adenmaha just cried as if she couldn't hear him. She didn't let go Tae Ho in fear that he may leave.

And in the end, Tae Ho's eyes also reddened. He embraced the shoulders of Adenmaha that was crying sorrowfully.

“Right, right Adenmaha. You were safe. Safe.”

“I....I was....really worr-worried.”

Adenmaha sobbed and spoke. Her pronunciation was a mess as she was burying her face in Tae Ho's chest, but she didn't mind about that one bit.

Tae Ho patted her back. He hugged her tightly so that the frail and small Adenmaha could calm down.

“I was also worried, Adenmaha.”

“I-I really thought that you were dead.....uwaa!”

She had barely calmed down a little, but she then burst out in happiness once more. They weren't tears of sorrow or surprise, but tears of joy.

“It's fine. It's fine.”

Tae Ho also grew relieved. Just like Adenmaha was worried about Tae Ho's survival, Tae Ho had also worried about her.

He was thankful that she was healthy without being injured.

And after some time passed—

Adenmaha barely managed to stop crying and then activated a mystical magic while still burying her flushed face in Tae Ho's chest. And then, the uniform of a Valkyrie that had the symbol of Idun engraved in it appeared over her instead of the sky blue dress she enjoyed wearing.

After some more seconds passed, Adenmaha managed to calm down her excitement a little bit, and only then did she put off her

face from Tae Ho's chest. But she still looked up at him while hanging on to him.

“But master....”

Her eyes were still teary, but it only lasted a moment, and her voice and eyes were rather sharp.

“Yes?”

Adenmaha's eyes sharpened even more, and Tae Ho answered with a nervous voice unconsciously. She turned to look at Nidhogg that was still grabbing on Tae Ho's clothes.

“Who is that? The one that's grabbing your arm.”

It bothered her. Precisely speaking, if Adenmaha's intuition was right, she was of a dragon race, was female, and a formidably dangerous existence.

Nidhogg flinched at Adenmaha's gaze and then said while stuttering, “I-I'm Nidhogg. I'm the dragon of Tae Ho master.”

“Tae Ho....mas...ter?”

Adenmaha turned to look at Tae Ho once again. He gulped dry saliva unconsciously, and Nidhogg continued speaking innocently.

“Yes, yes. Tae Ho master. Nidhogg is the dragon of Tae Ho master.”

Adenmaha let out a long sigh.

How worried was she for the past fifteen days.

She was begging that he would be alive.

“Explain this.”

A forced, polite way of speaking came out after a long while.

Her tone scared Tae Ho. It wasn't entirely appropriate, but he could only feel that way.

“No, so the thing is—”

“Tae Ho master. She’s scary.”

Nidhogg’s mumble was like pouring oil over a fire. No, it felt like pouring cold water on fire.

Adenmaha’s gaze became cold, and Tae Ho started to explain what had happened the past fifteen days.

‘I’m sorry, Odin.’

Cuchulainn, who materialized thanks to Odin’s magic, spoke towards Odin spindly. Whatever the case, this wasn’t something they should show the King of Gods.

But Odin smirked as if he didn’t mind.

“No, let’s keep watching. We have to wait for the information from the crows anyways. It’s also rather fun.”

The crows were still gathering by bringing information even now. Actually, the group also had to ask Adenmaha what had happened the past fifteen days, but right now, Tae Ho should be thinking about the peace in his family just like he always emphasized.

“So the thing is....”

Tae Ho started speaking, and Adenmaha listened to his story while shutting her mouth.

—

“So, putting it briefly, you got sent to the roots of the World Tree because the teleportation magic exploded, and you seduced Nidhogg that was trapped in the roots her entire life to get out of the roots?”

Adenmaha summarized the story just by grabbing the most important points after listening to Tae Ho’s story.

But Tae Ho had some complaints about it.

“....I feel like you are misleading things.”

“Anyways.”

Adenmaha crossed her arms as if blocking Tae Ho’s complaints like she had no thoughts of listening to him and then turned to look at Nidhogg who was still grabbing his clothes.

“Hm.”

The black dragon, Nidhogg.

Adenmaha came from Erin, but she had still heard that name. She had heard a brief explanation about her in Idun’s residence while studying to become a Valkyrie.

The ancient dragon that has existed alongside the World Tree.

It didn’t seem to be an overwhelming and evil existence like she heard in stories, but still, there was one point in common.

An existence that had been trapped in the roots for more than a thousand years.

‘How poor.’

Adenmaha felt compassion for Nidhogg, who was aware of her. Because of that, she said with a gentle face and expression, completely different to the one she had shown until now, “I’m called Adenmaha. You said that you also wanted to become Idun’s Valkyrie, right?”

“Yes yes. I will become Idun-nim’s Valkyrie.”

She was still Odin’s Valkyrie, but she was thinking of moving to Idun’s legion as her Valkyrie after she entered Valhalla. And actually, she had already received permission from Odin.

Adenmaha nodded.

“Right, then I will be your senior. I’m master’s first dragon, so I’m a senior in both regards.”

‘But a sea serpent isn’t a dragon.’

Cuchulainn criticized from behind, but Tae Ho and even

Adenmaha ignored him.

Nidhogg smiled brightly.

“Yes yes. Adenmaha is my senior. Nidhogg’s senior. Hehehe.”

It was a face that she was really happy that she had gotten a senior.

Adenmaha, who felt compassionate once again, stood on her toes to stroke the head of Nidhogg as she was bigger than her and then spoke to Tae Ho.

“Didn’t you seduce a really pure kid?”

Tae Ho just smiled bitterly as he had given up on defending himself, and Adenmaha turned to look at Nidhogg once again.

“First, let go of master’s arm. You can’t keep holding him like that.”

“Then I want to embrace you.”

“What?”

Nidhogg moved quickly even before she could react. As she covered the small Adenmaha that was about 10 centimeters shorter than her, Adenmaha had no means to dodge her.

“You are softer than Tae Ho master. Squishy. Feels good.”

“M-Master?”

Adenmaha called out to Tae Ho, but it had no meaning. Nidhogg embraced Adenmaha more tightly and said, “Tae Ho master likes Adenmaha a lot. That’s why I will also like Adenmaha. I saw Adenmaha a lot in Tae Ho master’s memories.”

Nidhogg spoke casually, but that became the decisive blow.

“Hm, well. It’s unavoidable.”

Adenmaha flushed when she heard that Tae Ho liked her and snorted, but she smiled like a fool and hugged back Nidhogg, who was putting a vague expression.

‘I thought that Nidhogg was the most pushover being.....but I think it actually was Adenmaha.’

Cuchulainn criticized precisely like usual.

Tae Ho thought that it was more of a rock, paper, scissors relationship, but whatever the case, he stayed silent as their relationship was good.

And finally, Odin opened his mouth.

“It seems like it has become somewhat organized.”

There were already several crows gathered near him. Tae Ho, who’d gotten a hold of himself, faced Odin with an embarrassed face, and Adenmaha also turned towards Odin while still holding on Nidhogg.

“Let’s start the conversation.”

About the things that had happened in Midgard the past fifteen days.

Odin started to speak ahead of Adenmaha.

< Episode 40 – Idun’s Valkyrie (1) > End

Episode 40/Chapter 2: Idun's Valkyrie (2)

“Um... but who are you?”

Adenmaha asked carefully when Odin was about to speak.

She knew that it was rude, but she had still asked because she thought that she wouldn't have the chance to ask when he started to speak for real.

And right now, Odin had the appearance of a wanderer while wearing a long hat and a cape. The Gods of Asgard would immediately recognize him as being Odin, but that wasn't the case for Adenmaha, who was from Erin.

In addition, Odin had hidden his strong divine power that emanated out naturally.

The ones that were surprised at Adenmaha's question were Tae Ho and Cuchulainn. Tae Ho hurriedly stood in front of Adenmaha and begged for forgiveness.

“I'm sorry, I was taken aback with the reencounter.....this is Idun's Valkyrie, Adenmaha. Adenmaha, this is Odin-nim.”

The King of Gods, Odin.

Adenmaha's eyes dimmed and at the same time she cursed at herself. She would have been able to know who was the one in front of her just by rolling her head a bit.

It was because the only one that had disappeared along with Tae Ho inside the mouth of the World Wolf was Odin.

“Idun's Valkyrie, Adenmaha, greets the King of Gods.”

Adenmaha expressed etiquette calmly even though she'd gotten surprised. She placed her fist on her chest like a Valkyrie and bowed, and her movements were trim and beautiful.

Nidhogg looked at that Adenmaha and imitated her movements from a corner. It was because she thought that she should also

know how to do that as she was a Valkyrie as well.

While everyone was nervous excluding Nidhogg, Odin put on a warm smile and nodded.

“I’m Odin, nice to meet you. Don’t mind it too much as everyone would have been busy in this situation. I also tried to continue talking too quickly.”

He was speaking to Tae Ho and also Adenmaha. It was because originally, Tae Ho should have been the one that should have introduced them.

“Thank you.”

Tae Ho and Adenmaha expressed etiquette at the same time. Odin smiled warmly once again when she saw Nidhogg imitating Adenmaha once again from the back.

“Then, let’s return to the topic.”

Odin fixed his expression and changed places for them to have a conversation. He stepped back a bit and then sat down in a place that seemed comfortable. Tae Ho sat first at Odin’s hand gesture, and Adenmaha sat beside him. Nidhogg tried to sit opposite of Adenmaha– so to say, at the right of Tae Ho, but that wasn’t possible. It was because Adenmaha made her seat next to her.

Cuchulainn opened his eyes widely and snickered at Adenmaha embracing Nidhogg and then sat down next to Tae Ho where Nidhogg was originally planning to sit at.

Odin finally started to speak.

“The Magician King has damaged the core of the World Tree and created a disturbance in Asgard. If it helps, please think of it as a huge-scaled earthquake.”

A miniaturized mold of Asgard and Midgard appeared while Odin explained. Asgard’s mold got swept by the big earthquake and the terrain itself changed.

“This catastrophe didn’t only affect Asgard but also Midgard. Natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, and hailstorms are occurring everywhere.”

A change occurred in the mold of Midgard. The change was smaller than Asgard’s but it was only a rough comparison. It was really a great natural disaster.

The people gathered in this place felt complicated thoughts when thinking about how many people died by being swept up in the natural disasters.

“Originally, I was planning to drive away the giants from Midgard to some extent and then recall the strongest warriors to Valhalla through the doors that were made previously, but the plan changed.”

Odin had lost the fight against the Magician King, and due to natural disasters created by the Magician King, Valhalla had to be sealed up.

“I don’t know if Freya sealed up Valhalla first or if she completed the Great Barrier first.....but the warriors are still isolated in Midgard, and that’s the same for the giants and evil spirits. It seems like Freya thought of a situation where the isolated warriors had defeated the remaining giants and evil spirits, but they wouldn’t be able to send additional reinforcements if they sealed up Valhalla. Therefore, she must have thought that this was the best method to protect the humans of Midgard.”

Odin thought that it was the right decision.

If Freya hadn’t completed the Great Barrier, then Midgard would be facing the same fate as Erin in this moment.

A world that gets destroyed because of the indiscriminate attacks of the giants and evil spirits.

Cuchulainn’s expression wasn’t particularly good after hearing Odin’s story. It was clear he was thinking of what’d happened in

Erin.

Odin continued explaining.

“There were also some superior-ranked warriors among the dispatched warriors, so it seems like the warriors are gathering with them as the center. They didn’t gather at one place as they were scattered all over the world, but if you see the big picture, there are currently five groups in service.”

Five red dots appeared in the mold of Midgard.

Odin asked Adenmaha,

“Adenmaha, I remember that you were in the place of the last battle. Can you tell me what happened?”

“Idun’s Valkyrie, Adenmaha, will start speaking.”

Odin revealed a bemused expression as Adenmaha expressed etiquette in a really polite manner.

“There’s no need to be so formal. You can just think that you are speaking to your master.”

Adenmaha seemed to hesitate at Odin’s permission, but she then nodded. She grabbed Tae Ho’s hand and started speaking.

“After Odin-nim and master disappeared.....a lot of things happened at the same time.”

Adenmaha closed her eyes for a moment and thought of that time. It was already a thing of the past, but her hands still trembled and her heart beat at the thought.

“After I transformed into a sea serpent, I took Merlin and fled uncontrollably. As for Ragnar-nim and the superior-ranked warriors.....I honestly don’t know. The World Wolf ran wild, and the Magician King used several strong magics in consecution....so it felt like the entire world was shaking.”

She couldn’t remember well after Tae Ho had gotten eaten. She just remembered that she had cried and screamed.

If it wasn't for Merlin, she would have lost her life while attacking the World Wolf.

"I turned back to look at the island after I barely managed to land on the coast, but the sky, the island, and everything else was silent as if all of that fuss had been a lie. But after that, the howl of the World Wolf rang loudly, and just like you've said, natural disasters started to occur."

"How was his howl?"

"Anger.....It was filled with an extreme anger. It gave the feeling that it couldn't control its rage."

Adenmaha's breathing became rough by its own accord. Tae Ho grabbed her hand tightly, and it seemed like it took effect that Adenmaha conjured a smile even though it was hard on her. Nidhogg embraced Adenmaha tighter unconsciously. It was because she felt that she had to.

While Adenmaha stroked Nidhogg's hair unavoidably, Odin and Tae Ho thought of the same thing.

Perhaps, Ragnar and Loki were still alive.

Maybe the World Wolf ended up howling in rage because it couldn't get them.

Actually, it was more probable for that person to be Loki, but Tae Ho still thought that Ragnar had lived if Loki had as well. He wanted to think that way.

"After we fled to the closest village with Merlin, the busy days came once again, but we were able to rescue the people of the village thanks to Merlin's magic."

Adenmaha closed her eyes and thought of what happened that day. Emotions started to surge up by their own.

"I also thought about.....dying. It seemed like the world would be destroyed once again, and even master passed away....."

Adenmaha had already experienced the destruction of Erin. She didn't want to see the destruction of another world once again.

On top of that, the fact that Tae Ho had died had left her stupefied, so she didn't even think about wanting to live anymore.

“Adenmaha.”

Tae Ho pulled her hand and spoke softly, and Adenmaha smiled brightly while her eyes got teary.

“It was only for a moment. People that are alive have to keep on living.”

That wasn't the truth as she had even injured herself. If Merlin hadn't stopped her, something irreversible could have really occurred.

Nidhogg embraced Adenmaha once again, and Adenmaha snorted because she was heavy but hugged her back as she didn't dislike it. She calmed down herself for a moment and continued speaking.

“The natural disasters didn't keep on for long. It stopped after about two days, and when the Great Barrier was reformed, it got rather peaceful.”

The Magician King would have left Midgard alongside the World Wolf after destroying the core of the World Tree. It wasn't that he didn't know that Freya was setting up the Great Barrier and actually he didn't have any more business left in Midgard.

“Merlin and I then decided to look for Bracky and Siri at the time, and fortunately enough, we were able to find their traces because both of them are famous.”

Adenmaha smiled merrily as if she wanted to lighten up the mood.

Certainly enough, just by looking at popularity, Bracky could beat most of the superior-ranked warriors easily. In addition, Siri

had also become quite famous because of the continued expeditions in Midgard.

‘Did you regroup with them?’

Adenmaha shook her head at Cuchulainn’s question.

“Not yet. We were on our way to look for them, and based on the rumors, it seems like there are several Valkyries near them.”

“Rasgrid.”

Tae Ho said reflexively, and Adenmaha nodded.

In the first place, regrouping with Rasgrid’s group was Bracky’s and Siri’s first task.

Tae Ho started to think about the ones that would be together with Bracky and Siri. Names and faces of the ones he missed started to pop up.

Rasgrid and Reginleif.

Ingrid and Gandur.

Harabal and his comrades of Valhalla.

And among them, he wanted to especially see Bracky and Siri. It had been 2 years for him as he hadn’t been able to see them since he’d entered the Tower of Shadows.

“Now that I see, Merlin would be worried about me.....Will he think that I’m still taking a shower.....?”

Adenmaha mumbled in a low voice.

Cuchulainn put on a satisfied smile when he thought of the nude Adenmaha that had appeared at Tae Ho’s call, but then he asked her,

‘We are currently near the lake of Elidi. Where have you been?’

“Kataron.”

“Kataron?”

The one that reacted was Tae Ho. Adenmaha nodded and started to explain.

“Merlin wanted to go there, and if you are worried about King Ivar, he’s fine. Merlin also told him about Princess Helga.”

She had passed away before Tae Ho went to rescue Odin. As Valhalla was sealed and the Great Barrier was recreated after that, she would have probably reached Idun’s residence safely.

“I heard your story well. Then, I will start speaking again.”

Everyone concentrated on Odin. He opened his mouth as Nidhogg gulped dry saliva with a nervous face.

“There are still quite a lot of giants and evil spirits left in Midgard. Just like I told you before, the groups that have the superior-ranked warriors as its center are fighting against them.”

The five dots were still shining over the mold of Midgard.

“Our first objective is to gather the warriors together. And of course, we should also take care of the giants and evil spirits that assented in Midgard. But there’s one thing that is more important than that.”

The reason they had come to Midgard was to acquire a force mighty enough to take back Asgard.

The army of the dead that was prepared in Niflheim was numerous, but it was only that. Their individual battle power couldn’t be compared to the warriors of Valhalla at all.

Still, there were exceptions like Galeon.

He was a skilled warrior that ranked at the top even among the intermediate-ranked warriors.

But he was the strongest warrior of Niflheim. And although this sounded too harsh, it also meant that the strongest warrior of Niflheim only amounted to an intermediate rank.

They needed strong warriors that could face the giants on their

own.

As the intermediate and superior-ranked warriors that had gotten dispatched to Midgard were all elites, they would surely become a great force to reckon if they managed to gather them.

This was Odin's first plan.

But another thought had befallen his mind.

The trigger of it was the battle in Niflheim.

“There's a high probability that the Magician King doesn't know that we are alive. It's not easy to open up a path to Niflheim now that Midgard's been sealed, and the force the Striking King was leading was quite big. It will be easy to think of it as a huge scaled expedition team that'd gotten dispatched at a far away place.”

In addition, Tae Ho had destroyed the door to jump through space. The remaining forces couldn't even return to Jotunheim.

“The situation in Midgard will also not enter their ears as it is currently sealed.”

This meant that there was a high chance for the giants not to notice even if they gathered up their forces in Midgard blatantly.

“But this doesn't mean that we have unlimited time. If the Striking King remains absent for too long, the Magician King will start to question whether or not something had happened in Niflheim. Even if it will be hard to dispatch another huge scaled force, he would still be able to dispatch a small number.”

The Striking King and the Magician King didn't have a good relationship. The Magician King would probably think that Hrumbak was being lazy with his report the first few days.

“I think that we have to finish taking preparations before that happens. The time I estimated is about a week.”

It was better than having no time at all, but it was still short.

Odin started to speak a bit faster.

“I don’t think he will realize that the black dragon is Nidhogg. He also knows how big the body of Nidhogg is and also knows that it can’t pass through the roots.”

In addition, it was widely known that Nidhogg was an evil and wicked dragon.

He would think that there would be no way for it to side with Asgard.

“Because of that, Nidhogg may be able to become our trump card, albeit an imperfect one. If their spies infiltrate our forces too deeply, information may travel of a black dragon having allied with Asgard, although they probably wouldn’t realize that it’s Nidhogg. By then, the Magician King will probably take some countermeasures.”

They were in a situation where they couldn’t use Nidhogg’s real body, so they would also come up with countermeasures however they could.

The trump card had some flaws just like they had said previously.

Odin stopped talking for a moment. He closed his only eye and thought of what happened the last fifteen days.

“In the battle at the island of the World Tree.....I feel at the face of the unexpected card that is the World Wolf. We also need a variable like that. A variable that can become a strong force for us, one that the Magician King didn’t and couldn’t expect.”

Nidhogg alone wasn’t enough.

They needed one more.

They could become certain of it at the battle in Niflheim.

“The King of Birds, Hraesvelg.”

The enemy of the black dragon, Nidhogg.

The white eagle that lived in the highest branch of the World Tree.

“We need it’s strength.”

< Episode 40 – Idun’s Valkyrie (2) > End

Episode 40/Chapter 3: Idun's Valkyrie (3)

Nidhogg flinched at the name of Hraesvelg and then blinked with eyes filled with expectation and fear.

Cuchulainn opened his mouth carefully.

‘Odin, Hraesvelg will certainly become a great strength against the giants if we do obtain its strength; however...I know that it’s rude to ask this, but do you have any methods to convince or make it submit? Tae Ho’s saga does work on any monster he can ride, but it’s at its strongest only against dragons.’

“I know that. It’s proven that Nidhogg was a special case.”

Actually, regardless of the saga being the ‘One that Controls Dragons’, it was impossible to make an ancient dragon submit.

However, the reason Tae Ho was able to achieve that was thanks to Nidhogg.

Nidhogg didn’t resist to Tae Ho at all. She rather assisted earnestly so that Tae Ho could take control over her more easily.

It wasn’t guaranteed that Hraesvelg would act like Nidhogg. No, it was much more probable that it wouldn’t act like Nidhogg at all.

In addition, the ‘One that Controls Dragons’ was specialized on controlling dragons, just like the name implied.

In the case of Nidhogg, he would have been able to control her to some extent even without her consent, but it was different for Hraesvelg.

It was unknown how much Tae Ho’s saga would work on Hraesvelg, that wasn’t a dragon.

Because of that, it wasn’t enough with only Tae Ho’s saga. They needed a new method to suppress it.

“I do have a method to gain its cooperation.”

Odin spoke directly and then pointed at the sky.

“Compared to Nidhogg, Hraesvelg isn’t alone, and the highest branch isn’t a restricted area like the roots. It’s just hard to get there.”

The highest branch was located at the highest part of the World Tree. Just like it was hard to approach the fog zone near the roots, it was as hard to get to the highest branch.

But just like Odin had said, it was merely difficult and not impossible.

“I did meet Hraesvelg a few times before. Compared to Nidhogg that was hidden in a veil, I know quite a lot of things about it compared to her.”

Nidhogg blushed as she was embarrassed at the word ‘hidden in a veil’.

Odin let out a laughter when he saw that and said with a soft face,

“I’m planning on proposing a victory to it.”

‘Are you speaking about.....a duel?’

“That’s right. It likes making bets as much as it likes eating food. In addition, it’s prideful and arrogant. I have something it desired since a long time ago, so if I put that at stake and bet its cooperation, I’m sure it will agree.”

‘Indeed. I understand what you are saying.’

Cuchulainn nodded slowly.

If it had the temperament Odin had described, there was a high probability it would agree to cooperate to keep its word.

Odin turned to look at Tae Ho.

“Idun’s warrior, you are the one that has the biggest chances among the ones that can battle against it. I will request this as the

King of Gods and the owner of Valhalla — will you be able to attain victory for me?”

There were some superior-ranked warriors among the ones that'd gotten dispatched to Midgard, but just by looking at how strong they were, Tae Ho was the best. As he now had the runes he'd obtained from defeating Hrumbak, Tae Ho was a powerful person whose strength exceeded the average of most superior-ranked warriors.

Adenmaha and Nidhogg put uneasy expressions when they heard that Tae Ho had to win against Hraesvelg, but Tae Ho nodded calmly. It was because he knew that he had the best chances just like Odin had said.

“I will work hard to achieve victory.”

Odin put on a smile of both guilt and satisfaction.

“Thank you. I keep saying this, but if we do recapture Valhalla, I will grant you a big reward befitting your merits.”

“I will be looking forward to it.”

Odin felt leisure as Tae Ho's answer was really easy going. He turned to look at everyone and said,

“The reason we passed by Midgard is to check the situation of the warriors and to see if there's someone that can gather me in my stead. And it should be enough with Reginleif and Rasgrid. I think that we will be able to go to the highest branch after we see their faces.”

Odin paused for a moment and rolled his fingers. Then, one of the spots that was drawn in the map started to emanate a particularly strong light.

“Rasgrid isn't that far away from Kataron right now. I will also send a crow to her and tell her to come here, so at most, we will be able to regroup with her tomorrow.....or in two days.”

The main point of the plan was to go to Niflheim after regrouping with Rasgrid to do some maintenance on their forces and then go to the highest branch by having Ratatoskr lead the way.

As the conversation conclude to an extent and they got ready to depart to Kataron, Adenmaha grew aware of her surroundings and pulled on Tae Ho's arm and said in a low voice,

“Um, master. I have something to tell you before we depart.”

“What is it?”

“Try summoning Rolo.”

“Rolo?”

Adenmaha spoke with a serious expression as Tae Ho tilted his head and asked back.

“There's something I decided with Heda when you were training in the Tower of Shadows. That if something happens to the residence or to Valhalla and the connection with Idun-nim gets cut off, you should summon Rolo outside and make him send the last message.”

It was a kind of an emergency call.

Tae Ho stayed silent instead of answering Adenmaha. There was a high chance Idun thought that Tae Ho was dead as he had 'Idun's Warrior' activated during the fight against the World Wolf, but he'd felt nothing.

“I will try.”

Tae Ho took out a summoning rock and inserted magic power into it.

“Rolo.”

The moment he spoke in a low voice, space opened up. Rolo showed up while biting the meat of a monster with its beak.

“Rolo!”

Tae Ho yelled in joy, but Rolo wasn't as glad as he was with Adenmaha. He looked at Tae Ho with eyes as if asking how he'd possibly been able to call him and then gulped down the meat he was grasping.

And it was then—

“Rolo!”

Rolo hurriedly turned his head when Adenmaha yelled. He opened his eyes widely and ran towards her.

“Kyak! It tickles!”

Adenmaha started to giggle when she got pushed down by Rolo. Rolo moved his tongue and licked Adenmaha's cheek on top of her. His actions really resembled a dog greeting its owner.

‘Hey, why does it seem that he's more affectionate towards Adenmaha?’

Cuchulainn pointed out the fact that didn't need to be said out loud and laughed.

Tae Ho looked at Rolo and Adenmaha with an absurd face, and Adenmaha said while pushing back Rolo's face,

“It's because he got called when he was eating. He's wondering why you only ever call him when he's eating.”

“Tell him that the time he eats is weird.”

This wasn't particularly the time to eat anyways.

But of course, it was doubtful if wild monsters had a determined meal time like humans had, but whatever the case, he still wanted to say something towards him.

Adenmaha giggled as if Tae Ho was cute and then started to inspect the place near Rolo's neck. Rolo lowered his head to help Adenmaha and then growled something in a low tone.

“Master, Rolo says that he has a letter from Heda.”

Not long after, they could discover a letter that was sealed with wax that was hanging in the necklace in Rolo’s neck.

Tae Ho put on a complicated expression when he saw the symbol of a golden apple engraved in the letter, but it only lasted a moment. He soon fixed his expression and opened the letter.

On the other hand, Adenmaha, who stood beside Tae Ho, looked over him. A presence seemed to have changed. It was that Nidhogg was looking at Tae Ho with a stiff expression.

“What’s wrong?”

It had only been an hour since she’d met Nidhogg, but she could know that the expression she was putting right now didn’t suit to her usual self.

Nidhogg frowned as if it was hard to explain and then stuttered,

“Tae Ho master likes Heda a lot. I also like her because master likes her but.... I feel stifled because master likes her too much. I can’t.....beat her. Yes, I don’t know if the expression is correct, but I don’t think I will be able to beat her. That’s why I feel like this.”

Nidhogg put on a teary face and Adenmaha let out a long sigh as she knew how she was feeling really well. Again, it only lasted for a moment. She pinched Nidhogg’s cheek with strength and said,

“So you can beat me? Can you? Huh? Am I that easy to deal with?”

Because she didn’t show the same expression when she first saw her.

“Hurts! It hurts! You are not. Adenmaha is not easy to deal with. I will just say that you aren’t.”

“What? You really..”

Nidhogg had said hurriedly with a teary face, but her choice of

words had been wrong.

But of course, Adenmaha also wasn't being serious. But it was true that the remark Nidhogg had made had put more strength in her hands.

Tae Ho read the first sentence of the letter while Cuchulainn looked at the war between the two dragons occurring in a corner of Midgard. A greeting that made him smile by its own was written there.

‘Hello once again?’

Tae Ho continued to read down the letter. The contents elaborated that Valhalla had been sealed urgently due to the attack of the Magician King but were written briefly.

‘Idun-nim and I believe in you. I will be waiting for the day we meet again. Certainly.’

‘PD: Check the envelope. There’s something Idun-nim entrusted you.’

After that were traces that something was written and erased several times over. Tae Ho read up to ‘I lo’ and then put back the letter while smiling bitterly.

There was a small medal the size of a finger inside the envelope, just like Heda had said. It was covered with gold, and he could feel the strong divine power of Idun.

“It’s a medal delegating absolute authority over a legion.”

Odin, who had been silent until now, spoke.

“A commander that has this certificate can exert the same authority as the God of the legion. You will be able to take care of all the matters such as appointing new Valkyries. Not only that, you will receive the same treatment as a God of your legion and not as a commander, when joining forces with other legions.”

Actually, it was a certificate that served like changing owners.

Tae Ho could understand why Idun had entrusted something like this to him.

He could know just by reading Heda's letter.

Idun didn't have proof that Tae Ho was alive, but she believed that he was alive until the end.

If Tae Ho was alive.

What did she have to do to be of help to him? What could be the best thing she could do now that Valhalla was sealed?

This was the answer she had come with after thinking for a long time. The gold medal that hoped for Tae Ho's survival was filled with Idun's earnest feelings.

Tae Ho gripped the medal strongly and thought of Idun's face.

He called for her name, that was gentle and affectionate, and prayed.

And after some more time passed—

When they were about to depart to Kataron, Cuchulainn turned to look at Odin with a really serious face. He paused for a moment and then asked with a low voice,

‘Odin, I have one last important question.’

A really important question that may determine defeat or victory in this strategy.

‘So is Hraesvelg a male or a female?’

Odin smiled bitterly at Cuchulainn's question, and Adenmaha listened attentively.

—

Strong wind always blew in the highest branch of the World Tree.

But the core of the branches was rather calm, just like the eye of a storm. It wasn't excessive to say that it was a place with no wind.

A black bird crossed the vast sky. The bird that fluttered its wings slowly and landed down wasn't small at all. It was the size of a human.

Vedrfolnir.

It, that was one of the several beasts living in the World Tree, possessed strong magic power. It transformed into a human the same time it landed and then covered its naked, white body with its feathers that had transformed into hair.

Vedrfolnir's human shape was a beautiful and intellectual woman that had sharp eyes like those of an eagle.

She expressed etiquette as soon as she landed down and bowed.

"My king, I have returned."

It was a bright and elegant voice that seemed like a marble rolling on a plate.

But the one Vedrfolnir expressed etiquette to didn't even turn to look at her. He looked down while sitting under the highest branch and said,

"Ratatoskr still hasn't come."

"There has been no notices from it for a few days already. The change that occurred in the World Tree too...I think it's time to pay attention to the things happening in the underworld."

Vedrfolnir spoke carefully, but it was to no avail. Her owner and the ruler of the highest branch, Hraesvelg snorted and said,

"Nonsense. I won't leave the highest branch. We will just repel the ones entering our territory, be it a giant or a God."

Hraesvelg was wearing a white, Korean attire. It was something he had received from the warriors of the Temple that had gone on to assist Asgard in the Great War.

A big and strong old man.

Hraesvelg had the same appearance as the warriors of the Temple. He was 2 meters tall and his broad shoulders were like the walls of a fortress.

His two sharp eyes started to glitter.

And the thing those eyes of his were looking at were the several worlds below the branch.

“Nidhogg.”

Hraesvelg’s old enemy, that lived in the lowest and deepest parts of the World Tree. The ancient dragon that was connected by fate with the King of Birds.

How much of an evil existence was it?

And how strong would it be?

The reason Hraesvelg moved was because Nidhogg had also started to move. Before that, he didn’t even have the thought to leave the highest branch.

“It’s not the time to leave yet.”

Hraesvelg spoke in a low voice and then looked away from the underworld.

He drew the battle he would face with his long enemy and put on a satisfied smile.

< Episode 40 – Idun’s Valkyrie (3) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 1: The highest branch (1)

The King of Birds, Hraesvelg, believed that he was born with the fate of a hero.

It wasn't because he was born as the ruler of the highest branch or because he was the King of Birds.

The connection of fates.

When Hraesvelg climbed to the throne, Skuld, one of the three sisters, came and told him his fate.

That he was fated with the black dragon, Nidhogg.

It wasn't a soft and sweet fate like that of a couple's.

Fated enemies that are symmetrical to each other.

Hraesvelg had been satisfied with that. His fate was connected to the evil and wicked ancient dragon that has existed with the World Tree, so wasn't this the strongest proof that Hraesvelg was born with the fate of a hero?

Hraesvelg had gathered information about Nidhogg, but it wasn't easy to do so as Nidhogg lived in the roots. Not even the God of Messages, Hermod, could approach the roots.

But Hraesvelg could luckily get a capable informer.

The beast, Ratatoskr.

He, that could freely come and go between the roots and the branches, told Hraesvelg many things about Nidhogg.

Nidhogg was really a scary dragon.

To start off, it was an evil creature. To the point that no other giants could compare to it.

The dragon, that resented everything in the world, was raising a deadly poison that would one day cover the world, and it didn't stop there. It ate off the roots every day to make it fall down. If the

three sisters didn't sprinkle the waters of life which could heal the injuries of the World Tree everyday, then the World Tree would have already crumbled.

But it's mind wasn't the only wicked thing.

It was a strong existence suitable of its name of an ancient dragon. Based on Ratatoskr's words, there was no other dragon that was as strong as it even if they searched in Asgard and Jotunheim.

The biggest and strongest dragon.

Everytime Ratatoskr visited the highest branch, he notified Hraesvelg of the curses Nidhogg was pouring unto the world.

It was terrible just by listening to it.

The black dragon, Nidhogg.

That terrible and evil controller of shadows was Hraesvelg's fated enemy.

The dragon had the same presence as a demon king so it could be said that Hraesvelg was born with the fate to defeat the demon king.

Hraesvelg was satisfied with his fate.

He didn't laze away in his training for the fated duel that would one day come.

Hraesvelg didn't leave the highest branch just like Nidhogg didn't leave the roots.

But only once.

Hraesvelg left the branches once in the past.

It was when the Great War occurred in Asgard.

Hraesvelg wasn't that interested in how the Great War turned out, but regardless of that, the reason he left the highest branch was to prepare for the fight against Nidhogg.

How strong would Hraesvelg be?

How would the existences that lived below the branches fight?

Hraesvelg saw a man in the world he first descended to.

It was something the citizens of the highest branch and Vedrfolnir didn't know, but Hraesvelg experienced the first defeat of his life against that man.

But he didn't feel bad.

That man was an existence that represented the ideal of a hero.

A great hero.

The king of heroes.

A shining existence that not even adding all the adjectives Hraesvelg knew of would be enough.

Hraesvelg admired him.

He wanted to be like him to the point where he wanted to gain experience by becoming his disciple.

But Hraesvelg was the owner of the highest branch. He had to return for his citizens.

When the Great War ended, Hraesvelg could hear about that man from Ratatoskr.

The man had faced a heroic death by facing countless enemies in the Great War.

Hraesvelg was deeply saddened, and he then grew determined.

That he would one day become the same as that man.

That he would become a Great Hero by putting that man as his objective.

And his thoughts had remained the same even after a hundred years had passed.

“Tae Ho!”

“Bracky!”

Tae Ho and Bracky called out to each other on a mountain road that connected to the fortress. They ran towards each other and shared hugs of men.

“You were alive!”

“You too, Bracky!”

The two of them yelled once again and embraced each other, but the two of them ended up inserting too much strength. Rather than inspiring hugs, it was more like a bear hug, which could be considered as a kind of attack.

“Kuook! I surrender! Surrender! Why are you this strong?!”

“Pant! Pant! You too, Bracky!”

In the end, the one that loosened up was Bracky. The faces of the two were completely red from having used too much strength.

And the woman that stared on at their stupid actions smiled bitterly from the side.

“Hug me lightly, please.”

“Captain Siri.”

“I told you to just call me Siri.”

As Siri lectured jokingly, Tae Ho smirked and opened his arms instead of replying. The two of them shared a natural and warm hug unlike the one with Bracky.

“I’m really glad to see you. Really glad”

“Me too.”

Meeting up again with a comrade was always a joyous thing.

In addition, Tae Ho was seeing the two of them in two years. The emotions he felt could only be different.

“Hey, isn’t the difference in temperature too different?”

Bracky complained with a discomforted face. Siri snickered and Tae Ho answered with an obvious face.

“Put yourself in my position.”

“Indeed. It’s understandable. I will have to try it now that I thought about it. Siri! Receive my love!”

“I will decline.”

Siri dodged simply by falling back and shook her head, and Bracky laughed at that.

“You didn’t change at all.”

“Adenmaha.”

Adenmaha smiled brightly at Siri’s call and then opened her arms just like Tae Ho had done. She hugged lightly with Siri and then placed her lips on her forehead.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

“Me too, me too.”

The one that’d gotten excited was obviously Bracky, but this time, Adenmaha acted the same as Siri.

“I will decline.”

“Sob, sob. You only hate me.”

Bracky dropped his shoulders in an exaggerated way. That wasn’t because he was really disappointed but more because he wanted to make others laugh.

And it was at that moment–

“I will do it then.”

“Huh?”

Bracky and Siri grew surprised at the unfamiliar voice and turned to look. A woman with black hair, who seemed to have just arrived

after following Adenmaha, was standing in the middle of the road.

Just by looking at her appearance, she seemed to be a Goddess. She was also really tall at the level of possibly surpassing the height of Siri, and thanks to her black hair, her white face was really beautiful in contrast.

Nidhogg opened her arms while Bracky blinked. She was just about to bless Bracky and Siri, so Adenmaha hurriedly grabbed her arm and said, “This is Nidhogg. She’s a pure girl, so don’t say anything weird. And don’t have evil intentions either.”

“Why are you only looking at me?”

Bracky pouted, and Adenmaha spoke to Nidhogg.

“Nidhogg, what did I say? Didn’t I tell you to not approach unfamiliar people as you please?”

“Yes, yes. Adenmaha did say that. I will listen to your words.”

“How nice.”

Adenmaha stood on her toes and stroked her head. Nidhogg smiled as if she really liked Adenmaha’s stroke, and Bracky and Siri tilted their heads at the scene that was somewhat twisted but was nice to see simultaneously.

“It seems like we need some introductions.”

It was Siri who spoke up. Tae Ho stood up and said,

“She’s Nidhogg. I will introduce her properly at a later time.”

Bracky just nodded, but it was different for Siri. It was because she immediately thought of the black dragon with the name of Nidhogg.

But Tae Ho had already said that he would explain later. Siri was someone that would believe in Tae Ho until the end.

“I understand. Nidhogg, I’m Siri, and he’s Bracky.”

“I’m Nidhogg. I’m the second dragon of Tae Ho master. Nice to

meet you.”

Nidhogg waved her hand and greeted them like a child, and then, Siri and Bracky turned to look at Tae Ho.

“What? Why are you looking at me like that?”

The eyes as if they were looking at a bastard.

‘It’s all your retribution.’

Bracky opened his mouth once again while Cuchulainn laughed.

“The second? Is the first dragon Rolo?”

“Hey, why does Rolo appear here? That’s obviously me. And shouldn’t you be surprised by the fact that she’s a dragon?”

Bracky laughed as Adenmaha got angry.

“Let’s speak about the details at a later time. Whatever the case, nice to meet you Nidhogg. Treat me well.”

“Same here. Tae Ho master likes Siri and Bracky a lot, so I also like you too.”

Nidhogg embraced Siri and said. Siri got a bit perplexed, but she had already hugged with Adenmaha and Tae Ho. And in addition, she didn’t dislike Nidhogg’s childlike affection, so she hugged her back warmly.

“Hey, Tae Ho, aren’t Siri and I different?”

“Oh, now that I see....”

He could feel it even without using the ‘Eyes of the Dragon’. The amount of runes Bracky and Siri had had increased exponentially, and they had become much stronger than before.

Bracky smirked at Tae Ho’s admiration and shrugged his shoulders as if acting cool.

“We became like this after fighting without stop in these fifteen days. Don’t you think that we will soon become superior-ranked warriors?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Good, good. Now it’s only a matter of time to catch up to you.....What? When did you get that strong?!”

The reason behind Bracky’s shock was simple. It was because Tae Ho released the aura he’d been hiding.

If one reached the level Bracky and Siri were at, they also became able to sense the amount of runes another had just by looking.

Siri mumbled with a dumbfounded face.

“The amount of runes.....is really incredible.”

Tae Ho would probably have more runes even if he gathered Siri’s and Bracky’s runes together.

Bracky asked in his excitement compared to the relatively calm Siri, “What, you only fought in the time we didn’t see you? No, the runes are secondary, but how did your skills increase that much? Is that possible in only two months?”

What Bracky emphasized was Tae Ho’s skills rather than his runes.

He could feel it just by looking at his posture. Even Tae Ho’s aura had changed. Bracky felt that he wouldn’t even become Tae Ho’s opponent even if they fought with pure skills.

“A lot of things happened. Ah, and I didn’t fight that much the past fifteen days. I think I only fought properly about two times.”

“Two times? Two times and you gathered that much runes? Just what did you fight against?”

“The World Wolf, an ancient dragon, and a giant king.”

“What?”

Bracky asked back with a dumbfounded face, and even the usually calm Siri couldn’t help but grow bewildered.

Tae Ho shrugged his shoulders as if he enjoyed the reaction of the

two people. It was because there was something else in which they should have been surprised about.

“I will speak the details later, as Odin has almost arrived.”

“Wh, who?”

“Odin-nim. The King of Gods.”

Bracky and Siri couldn't speak anymore.

—

“It was hard.”

A few hours after the joyous encounter.

When Tae Ho arrived at the fortress, he shared greetings with Rasgrid and the other Valkyries and started to speak about the things that had happened to him.

Tae Ho's group had faced several adventures, but Bracky's group didn't fall back either.

And rather, just by looking at the density, Bracky's group was higher. Compared to Tae Ho, who had been out of commission for almost ten of the past twenty days, Bracky's group had fought fiercely everyday.

When the conversation concluded to an extent, they opened up a banquet and started to eat and drink like they did in Valhalla.

It wasn't that the fortress had plenty of provisions, but everyone had accepted Bracky's claim that if they didn't open a banquet today, they would never do it.

“It was fun. Bracky is fun. It's fun being with him.”

Nidhogg arrived the room that was provided to Tae Ho and mumbled with sleepy eyes. Adenmaha assisted her and said to Tae Ho, “We will be departing tomorrow morning, so end it here and go to sleep.”

“Right. Have a good night.”

“Sleep well.”

Nidhogg smiled merrily and staggered while walking and then tried to walk to Tae Ho’s bedroom. But Adenmaha was a bit faster than her.

“Wait, where do you think you are going?”

Adenmaha grabbed Nidhogg’s arm tightly, but she grumbled with still sleepy eyes.

“I will sleep with Tae Ho master. I also have to bless him today. I couldn’t do it yesterday. Tae Ho master likes blessings a lot. A lot”

Blessing.

“What do you mean?”

Adenmaha opened her eyes sharply and asked. Her eyes were really cold and fierce.

Tae Ho grew nervous unconsciously and answered quickly, “No, it’s just a blessing. Only a blessing. Because of the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him.’”

“Hmm.”

He did have a fair cause because the ‘Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him’ needed blessings of Valkyries to increase its completion rate.

“Nidhogg is tired. I want to bless master and go to sleep.”

Nidhogg freed herself from Adenmaha’s hands and approached Tae Ho.

“Wait, Nidho.....”

“Sleep well, Tae Ho master.”

Nidhogg blessed Tae Ho like that and it was the best blessing like she always did.

“May Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

Nidhogg finished her blessing while smiling merrily and then lay down on her bed as if collapsing. She then fell asleep immediately.

One person disappeared, and only two were left.

The first one that opened her mouth was Adenmaha.

“Tae Ho, mas...ter?”

“No, so.....”

He didn’t know why he should make an excuse, but he felt like he had to do it.

But it was at that moment–

“Me too.”

“Huh?”

“I will also give you! The best blessing!”

Adenmaha yelled with a red face.

“Ah, Adenmaha?”

Adenmaha didn’t stop. Thinking about it, she felt that it was too unfair. Not even her, who could be said to be a formal member of Idun’s legion, had been able to bless Tae Ho, but some newcomer that came from who-knows-where dared to bless him?

The excited Adenmaha pushed Tae Ho to his bed. If it was strength, Tae Ho was certainly stronger than her, but he couldn’t resist her properly.

Adenmaha took a deep breath. She faced Tae Ho, and he flinched and flushed unconsciously.

He had received the best blessing from several people because of a just cause, but it was different this time. Thinking that the one he was facing was Adenmaha, he couldn’t treat her as he did with Freya.

While Tae Ho fell in chaos that was hard to describe, Adenmaha had also fallen in her own chaos. She trembled with a completely

red face and yelled.

“Cl-close your eyes! It’s embarrassing!”

Then, wouldn’t it be better to not give the best blessing?

‘It’s your retribution.’

When Tae Ho closed his eyes after he’d gotten pushed by Adenmaha’s strength, Cuchulainn started to laugh.

And it was after that–

“I-I will do it!”

Adenmaha grew determined and said. Tae Ho clenched his fist in the nervousness and then felt a soft and warm feeling.

The best blessing.

It was special indeed, and Tae Ho could only open his eyes.

[Synchro rate: 76%]

The synchro rate had increased. It, that had increased up to 75% after the fight against Hrumbak, had increased one more percent.

‘No, this isn’t even a fight, so can the synchro rate really increase with this?’

Cuchulainn was shocked, but originally, the synchro rate didn’t only increase through battles. Tae Ho could then realize why the synchro rate had increased. It was because he could see another sentence of light that Cuchulainn couldn’t see.

[Saga: The Master of Extreme Cold]

The second dragon the dragon knight, Kalsted, had made a contract with.

The old enemy and twin star of the first dragon, Shooting Star, Master of Flames, was Javier, Master of Extreme Cold.

A seal of Javier was then carved into Adenmaha just like the seal of Shooting Star had been carved into Rolo.

It was a saga that should have originally been created when Tae Ho's synchro rate reached the 70%, but it had only taken shape now as he didn't have anyone worthy to engrave it on.

Adenmaha blinked as she understood instinctively what had happened to her. Her eyes which had grown mottled red because of the embarrassment started to show happiness.

“I'm now a real dragon.”

Increasing in rank from a sea serpent to a frost-white dragon.

Tae Ho nodded and grew happy along with Adenmaha. And Cuchulainn, who'd been silently watching at all of it, said shortly, 'This is crazy.'

The ones that were meant to become big would be able to do anything.

“May Idun's blessing accompany you.”

Adenmaha gave one more surprise blessing to Tae Ho, now that he had dropped his guard.

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (1) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 2: The highest branch (2)

The next morning, Tae Ho's group hurriedly prepared to depart.

They were escorted by the Valkyries with Rasgrid at the lead.

"It's regretful that we have to separate as soon as we meet, but we can't do anything about it as it's something this important. I will entrust Midgard to you."

She faced Tae Ho as she spoke. Rasgrid, who had received full authority over Midgard from Odin, was putting on a warm expression like the Goddess of Spring that didn't suit her nickname of the Ice Princess.

"I will be able to trust in you, Rasgrid."

Rasgrid revealed a smile as Tae Ho also spoke with a happy expression. Reginleif extended her head behind her.

"Don't forget that I'm also here."

"Me too,"

Gandur giggled and added. They were the usually magnanimous Reginleif and pleasant Gandur.

The always sincere Ingrid frowned and said,

"Show some etiquette towards the commander, the three of you. In addition, didn't he receive the medal from Idun-nim?"

Ingrid had spoken politely to Tae Ho ever since he'd become a commander. Reginleif smiled bitterly as if it was troublesome, and Gandur let out a sigh in front of her.

So in the end, Tae Ho had to be the one to step up.

"It's fine in informal occasions."

"He says so."

“Everything is good with you, Ingrid, but the only flaw you have is that you are too stiff.”

Gandur and Reginleif added as if this was the opportunity.

“Ha...”

Ingrid just let out a sigh instead of rebuking, and Tae Ho patted her shoulder while trying to console her.

The conversation with the Valkyries was a really enjoyable one, but they didn't have the leisure to make it long. Rasgrid, who was just listening to the conversation, stepped up and stood in front of Tae Ho to give him a blessing before they split up.

“May Odin's blessing accompany you on your path.”

Rasgrid spoke shyly after blessing Tae Ho on his forehead. It wasn't because it was embarrassing to do so. It was because it was awkward to give Tae Ho Odin's blessing when the King of Gods would be travelling with him.

‘The Ice Princess indeed.’

It was the hard-headed Rasgrid, different from Ingrid.

Rasgrid finished giving her blessing while Cuchulainn pondered. Afterwards, Reginleif laughed magnanimously and stepped up.

“So, I'm next?”

“Then, it will be me.”

“I will go after you,”

Ingrid spoke briefly as Gandur said while giggling.

“May Tir's blessing accompany you.”

“May Ullr's blessing accompany you.”

“May Njord's blessing accompany you.”

‘I'm feeling dumb.’

Cuchulainn mumbled when he saw the Valkyries blessing Tae Ho

upon his forehead. This had also happened the day before, but he still felt a bit dumbfounded when looking at the present scene.

After the blessings ended, Tae Ho stood on the magic circle Odin had prepared with Adenmaha, Nidhogg, and Merlin.

Odin gave a blessing to both Rasgrid and the other Valkyries and then activated the magic circle.

They needed more time to vacate Midgard compared to when they'd entered it. Cuchulainn asked in a low voice while the light of the magic circle started to grow stronger, 'Hey, you made it that way on purpose, right?'

'What?'

'The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him.'

Tae Ho shrugged his shoulders as if he didn't know what Cuchulainn was talking about.

'Ey, no way.'

'No way my ass! You did make it that way on purpose.'

It was, of course, half a joke. As the origin of the saga, the effects and ways it evolved were decided automatically compared to the geass where the user could set up the conditions; it was hard to control it precisely.

The main reason why 'The Warrior that had a Valkyrie Meet Him.' had taken its current shape was mostly thanks to Heda, as she had given him a blessing every time they'd met.

'We will be able to solve the business in Midgard properly, right?'

Tae Ho asked in a low voice as if he was getting nervous.

Actually, the two of them were acting calm right now, but even in this moment, battles against the giants would still be occurring in Midgard and in Asgard.

If they wanted to drive them back and protect Asgard, they had

to successfully accomplish the task they'd been entrusted with.

‘It will turn out well. Rasgrid isn't the only one here, and there are also quite a lot of capable Valkyries. There's also Siri and Bracky. In my opinion, things can only turn out okay.’

Cuchulainn spoke refreshingly as if telling him not to worry and then looked at the right of Nidhogg, who was clinging to Tae Ho.

‘And have some faith in Merlin too. Don't you know how to respect your elders?’

‘I am doing it plentifully.’

‘Yeah, right.’

Merlin shrugged his shoulders as he was made aware of Cuchulainn's gaze.

He had moved at a slower pace since they'd met up in Kataron as he had to assist Odin, who couldn't move properly, with several magics and mystical powers.

And after a while, the magic circle finished its preparations just in time.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

The magic circle promptly activated after the two of them finished their greetings.

The door to Niflheim opened up.

—

“We arrived.”

Upon blinking their eyes, the group saw that they weren't in Midgard, but in Niflheim.

They were inside the floating garden of Hela where they had first departed from.

Merlin, who had visited Niflheim previously, albeit only once, looked at his surroundings with a quite calm face, but that wasn't the case for Adenmaha.

She was staring glassy-eyed at the sky that was bright even though it didn't have a sun.

On the other hand, Odin, who had started to gather information through the crows, motioned to Tae Ho and said, "It seems like Hela is busy with her thing, and we probably won't need to waste time. We will go to Ratatoskr immediately."

The crows scattered once again as Odin waved his hand. One of the crows flew to Hela and would probably reach her by the time they'd finished their business with Ratatoskr.

The administrator of the floating garden led them to the place Ratatosker was locked up. He'd said that it was a prison made in a short period of time by gathering and condensing the frost of Niflheim.

After they emerged from the palace of Hela, they saw a rectangular building seemingly made of ice from far away.

Once they'd approached it to a certain extent, Adenmaha pulled on Tae Ho's arm without warning and whispered to him, "Master, you remember what you promised me last night, right?"

"You are going to do it for real?"

"Then I should do it for fake? I even got permission from Odin-nim."

Adenmaha spoke with eyes filled with enthusiasm as if she couldn't step back now. She had been holding it back since she had heard the story from Nidhogg.

'She is also really nice. That's why I like her.'

Cuchulainn's comment was as precise as always.

And because of that, Tae Ho nodded. He faced Adenmaha and

said, “Then, do my share too.”

“Leave it to me.”

Adenmaha clenched her fists and then glared at the prison where Ratatoskr was locked up.

—

The door of the ice prison slowly opened.

This place was merely an empty cube, a scene befitting of a prison cell.

Ratatoskr, asleep in a corner of the room, raised its head slowly as if woken by the sound of the door opening.

Adenmaha entered the prison and took a deep breath. She had already received permission, but she turned to look at Odin once again, and Odin nodded towards her.

Odin and Tae Ho had already given her permission.

The only thing left now was to actually do it.

Adenmaha held her breath and walked towards Ratatoskr. She didn't hide her resentment even a little bit and yelled, “Hey! Are you Ratatoskr?”

“What are you?”

Ratatoskr asked with fierceness as if it was annoyed. It didn't know about Odin or Tae Ho, but it thought that it had no reason to beg towards girl that looked really weak in its eyes.

But its guess was wrong.

Adenmaha smiled coldly and took one more step. She transformed from a Goddess to a sea serpent and yelled, “I'm Nidhogg's senior!”

The sea serpent was small compared to Ratatoskr, that stretched tens of meters, and because of that, Ratatoskr snorted once more, but its guess was once again wrong.

Adenmaha's transformation hadn't ended yet.

[Saga: The Master of Frost]

As soon as Tae Ho activated his saga, a flashy light started to cover Adenmaha's form.

Ratatoskr blinked in surprise. It raised its head unconsciously and looked at the existence that was looking down at it.

The Master of Frost, Javier.

A frost-white dragon.

Actually, the two of them were similarly sized, but Ratatoskr was a squirrel and Adenmaha was a dragon. There was a wall that couldn't be surpassed between the two of them.

"This bitch! The ones like you have to get hit first!"

Adenmaha yelled sharply and then fired an ice breath. While Ratatoskr closed its eyes as the frost poured over its body, Adenmaha swept her tail as if she'd been waiting for it.

Adenmaha's tail sweep hit Ratatoskr at full strength. Ratatoskr collapsed without being able to scream at the heavy attack.

But Adenmaha didn't stop. She flew up and then crushed Ratatoskr with her weight. She then climbed on Ratatoskr and lashed out with her head, tail, and limbs.

"I was wrong! I'm sorry!"

"Empty words!"

Adenmaha ignored its cries. Ratatoskr was the same kind of being as Bress the Tyrant.

A wicked and sly trash.

They only said that they were sorry when they were at a disadvantage or were in danger. There was no way their words could be sincere as they were just thinking of avoiding danger.

Adenmaha had heard what had happened to Nidhogg. It was

painful just listening to it, so she couldn't hear everything, but it was enough with only that.

“Sa-Save me! Save me Nidhogg!”

“You are looking for Nidhogg in this situation?”

Ratatoskr's words made Adenmaha further enraged.

The reason Ratatoskr was looking for Nidhogg was simple.

It was because it still didn't know what it had done wrong.

It didn't feel even the slightest bit sorry for Nidhogg.

Adenmaha didn't endure it. She hit Ratatoskr fiercely so that it wasn't even able to utter the 'Ni' syllable of Nidhogg's name.

Her efforts continued for some time...

Adenmaha stepped on the trembling head of Ratatoskr and took a deep breath to calm herself down.

“Bad bastard. You're left here in this state because of my leniency. If I were Heda, you would already be dead!”

Ratatoskr just twitched under Adenmaha's feet.

“Whew.”

Adenmaha let out a sigh and transformed into a Goddess. She approached Nidhogg, who was hiding behind Tae Ho with a scared expression.

“Nidhogg.”

“Ye-Yes?”

Nidhogg's eyes weren't only looking at Adenmaha but also at Ratatoskr.

One could tell at a glance.

Nidhogg was sincerely worried about Ratatoskr.

It was a stifling thing, but that's why Adenmaha liked Nidhogg even more. She opened her arms and embraced Nidhogg.

“Tell me when someone bothers you from now on. Understood?”

“Ye-Yes. I will...”

Nidhogg entered Adenmaha’s embrace. It was scary to see how roughly Adenmaha had beaten up Ratatoskr, but she was always kind and warm. Nidhogg liked Adenmaha a lot.

Ratatoskr was collapsed in a corner, Nidhogg and Adenmaha were embracing each other, and Cuchulainn said while enjoying the mood, ‘Adenmaha also has her temperament. That’s why I like her more. I are really blessed.’

Tae Ho also agreed. Having met Adenmaha was a blessing as big as having met Heda.

‘But saying that the creature would already be dead if it had been Heda. Does Heda have a temper too?’

While Cuchulainn thought of Scathach and mumbled, Tae Ho shook his head compared to what he’d done until now.

‘She should have said that casually. You know how nice Heda is.’

‘I think that the one that has fallen deepest into love isn’t Adenmaha but you.’

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and said.

Odin, who was watching all of this, started to walk slowly as if it was now his turn. He stood in front of Ratatoskr and said in a low voice, “Ratatoskr.”

“What!Why are you calling me?”

Ratatoskr held its breath as he saw who it was after yelling and then took a good posture.

But Odin didn’t even snort towards the pitiful Ratatoskr. He just looked at it with his unchanging, cold eyes.

“We are going to head to the highest branch. You must know the path to get there, right?”

“Ah, I do, but–”

“Lead us. We have some business with Hraesvelg.”

Ratatoskr stood on its guard as soon as Odin finished speaking. It then stood up and stuck to a wall of the cold prison.

“Ah, no! I can’t!”

“Why are you saying that?”

“Hraesvelg will try to kill me if he sees Nidhogg!”

Nidhogg, who was burying her face in Adenmaha’s chest, raised her head upon being mentioned.

Adenmaha frowned as Tae Ho did. They understood why Ratatoskr had said that.

And it was the same for Odin, but he just asked with a low tone with his unchanging eyes, “How so?”

“Th-That’s.....anyways! I can’t go there. Never. That crazy bird, Hraesvelg, will kill me! That’s why I can’t!”

Hraesvelg perceived Nidhogg as being a strong and evil existence that was like the demon king that would bring destruction to the world.

Hraesvelg’s old enemy.

The ancient dragon that showed its hatred towards the world every day.

What would happen if Hraesvelg saw Nidhogg?

Nidhogg would offer a shy greeting and Hraesvelg would grow excited saying that he would duel his old, fated enemy while putting the stake of the world on the line.

Nidhogg would certainly not be able to speak properly and would probably stutter.

They didn’t want to imagine what would happen after that. There was only one thing Hraesvelg would do when the things

Ratatoskr had said over thousand years turned out to be lies.

That's why it couldn't.

It was impossible to go to Hraesvelg.

Ratatoskr denied fiercely. It yelled several times that it didn't want to go.

And that was a mistake.

Ratatoskr was forgetting who the being was in front of it.

"Ratatoskr, it seems like you are misunderstanding something—"

Odin spoke with an indifferent tone, but his voice made Ratatoskr choke. The terrible pain that surged from the rune of obedience made Ratatoskr realize Odin's resolve in a second.

The King of Gods, Odin.

The merciless and cruel God of War.

"You don't have a choice."

If Hraesvelg was the disaster that would come in the future, then Odin was an existence that could put Ratatoskr into an even more terrible pain right now.

"Hi-Hiik."

Ratatoskr let out a terrified voice and looked around, but there was no one that would side with it. Nidhogg, who had might have stood up for it, was tied up. Adenmaha had buried Nidhogg's face in her chest so that she wasn't able to see anything.

Odin's eyes was silent.

And Tae Ho's and Adenmaha's gazes were also cold.

"I understand! I will lead you! I will!"

In the end, Ratatoskr yelled his compliance through tears.

—

"Wh-What is this? Why is it so big?"

“The real deal is bigger. Much bigger than that.”

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (2) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 3: The highest branch

(3)

Adenmaha widely opened her eyes while revealing a dumbfounded face.

“Wh-What is this? Why is it so big?”

Her bewildered voice came out unavoidably.

The body of the black dragon, Nidhogg.

The body presented an overwhelming force to the ones looking at it even though it was only lying down.

Adenmaha had faced quite a lot of hardships as a Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann, but it was her first time seeing a dragon this big.

Beside her, Nidhogg felt happy as Adenmaha exclaimed sincerely. She laughed stupidly and then spread her arms.

“The real deal is bigger than that. Muuuuuch more bigger.”

Because Nidhogg’s real body stretched 2 kilometers. From a simple glance, it was twenty times bigger than the dragon before them, so it was easily ten times bigger.

Nidhogg spread her arms trying to express how huge it was, but she didn’t stop there and also stood on her toes. Of course, there was no way she’d be able to accurately transmit the size, but Adenmaha still admired the fact that it was much bigger.

“Bigger than that? And by a lot?”

“Yes, yes. Much, much bigger.”

Nidhogg answered hurriedly and thought of other methods to express hugeness, but she couldn’t think of anything.

And that was the same for Adenmaha.

She just looked up at the body of Nidhogg with her dumbfounded face and let out sounds of admiration.

“Haa. How amazing. Really incredible.”

She had just accepted the fact that Tae Ho had defeated an army of the giants while riding upon Nidhogg, but now she could understand it certainly.

With a body that big, it would be able to create catastrophe and turmoil just by rolling on the ground.

Adenmaha thought of when she had to roll in the Winter Tree Forest of Kataron.

The day she had to roll to take care of the moving trees in an instant.

Didn't Nidhogg also roll on the battlefield?

‘Hey, no way.’

She shook her head reflexively at the mental image of a dragon that was a hundred meters long rolling over a battlefield. She convinced herself that not even Tae Ho would make Nidhogg do something like that.

“Anyways, you really are amazing.”

Nidhogg scratched her head as Adenmaha exclaimed once again and didn't know what to do. She laughed like a fool and then slightly pulled on Adenmaha's clothes.

“Adenmaha.”

“Yes?”

“Can't you do it a bit more?”

Nidhogg said hesitantly while flushing. Adenmaha tilted her head because she couldn't understand what she was saying, but she soon understood.

What Nidhogg wanted.

The words Ratatoskr didn't tell her.

Adenmaha smiled brightly. She spread her arms widely and said energetically, "Incredible. Our Nidhogg is amazing, big and beautiful!"

Ratatoskr had only told her that she was big and a fool.

It had only told her that she was uselessly big.

Nidhogg also thought like that. She could only do so.

But that wasn't the case now.

Adenmaha had told her that she was amazing. Instead of cursing her that she was big and a fool, she had praised that her body was big and beautiful.

"Ehehehe."

Laughter kept coming out. Her face felt hot, but she couldn't stop laughing.

And what came out wasn't only laughter. Her eyes started to redden, and tears fell down unconsciously as well.

Adenmaha aimed a silent smile at Nidhogg. She smirked instead of wiping off Nidhogg's tears and then expressed her admiration more energetically.

"How are you this amazing? Really, really amazing. You are so amazing, I can't stop admiring."

She spoke gently as if complimenting a kid.

Nidhogg couldn't endure it anymore and embraced Adenmaha.

"I like Adenmaha a lot!"

"Me too. Me too, Nidhogg." (ED Note: Narcissism much, Adenmaha?) Adenmaha patted Nidhogg's back. Although Nidhogg was 10cm taller than her, no matter who saw them, the one that got hugged this time was Nidhogg.

Not a dislike but a I like you.

Nidhogg bit her lips and then burst into tears.

She was crying so sorrowfully that she began soaking Adenmaha's clothes, but she didn't push her back. She rather hugged her more warmly.

And Cuchulainn, that was looking that from a distant place, said as his eyes became red, 'How nice and warm. It's so nice and warm that I don't need a stove at all.'

Nidhogg was one case, but Cuchulainn had grown amazed of Adenmaha.

He had only seen her assuming a prim air in front of Tae Ho, but for her to be a woman overflowing with motherly love....

'A Goddess is still a Goddess in the end.'

Cuchulainn smirked once again. It was because he remembered Adenmaha's past when she had chosen to become the slave of Bress the Tyrant by her own decision to save the citizens of Erin.

Hela, who didn't know much about Nidhogg compared to the other two, looked at Nidhogg with surprise written over her face.

"I could have never imagined that the black dragon was like this."

It was even more so as she had seen her fight valiantly in the battlefield.

Odin smiled bitterly.

"Right, that was also the case for me. I only guessed that it would be an evil and wicked existence."

He hadn't been able to realize it even though he had heard Nidhogg's cry filled with sorrow.

Odin took a deep breath and turned to look at Hela.

"Are the preparations going well?"

"We have finished everything. I will lead the Naglfar whenever

you give the order and head to Asgard.”

There were already dozens of Naglfars prepared, ships made with the claws and nails of the dead.

“That’s a relief to hear.”

The individual strength of the dead was certainly weak. They were beings that couldn’t even fight properly against the giants, but the story changed when their numbers reached the hundred thousands. Even though it would still be impossible to face the giants, it wasn’t impossible to face the evil spirits.

“Odin, are you going to the highest branch right now?”

“I’m planning to do so. There’s no reason to delay any further.”

They had to rather hurry. He had gathered a bit of information from Niflheim and Midgard, but he still didn’t have any detailed information regarding Asgard.

Odin answered immediately Hela’s question and then turned to look at Tae Ho who was standing next to Merlin.

“Idun’s warrior.”

“Yes, Odin?”

“Hraesvelg is the protector and the king of the highest branch. He will probably show himself when he sees us approach.”

And Nidhogg was especially in the group. He’d never met Nidhogg even once since he’d been born, but he should know of her characteristics, like her four pair of wings and four horns, through Ratatoskr.

It was obvious he would come charging when he heard that a black dragon had appeared.

“I will proceed with the negotiations just like I said before, but the thing after that is entirely up to you.”

Everything pertaining to defeating Hraesvelg rested on Tae Ho’s

shoulders. It wasn't that Odin had irresponsibly handed the task to him. Odin really trusted Tae Ho that much.

“Leave it to me,”

Tae Ho hit his chest and answered. Odin remembered the time Tae Ho had appeared to save him and smiled bitterly. He thought of Idun, who'd tried hard to hide Tae Ho from his eyes, and made a hand gesture.

“Come closer. I will give you a blessing.”

‘Oh nice. You like blessings. Get a lot of them. Two at least.’

Cuchulainn butted in as if this was the right moment.

Tae Ho smiled bitterly inwardly and approached Odin and then blessed him on his forehead.

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

“For Asgard and the Nine Realms.”

They didn't have time to waste anymore, just like Odin had said. The group then headed toward the highest branch with Ratatoskr as their guide.

—

The World Tree, Yggdrasil, could be said to be a kind of system that was a composition of the world itself.

Because of that, the World Tree wasn't only what one could see. The World Tree passing through Niflheim, Midgard, and Asgard was merely the corporeal part of the entire tree.

Hraesvelg knew this fact instinctively. He couldn't explain it in detail, but he could feel it.

‘There isn't only one path that leads to the highest branch.’

There were several other paths that led to the highest branch aside from climbing the materialized tree.

And the path Ratatoskr used was certainly a path they couldn't

see.

Because of that, Hraesvelg left watchmen in several parts of the highest branch. It was to drive away anyone approaching the highest branch quickly, be it a God or a giant.

Hraesvelg, who had the appearance of a sturdy, old man, stood on the wide and solitary training center and slowly took a stance.

He would swing his spear and cut the air horizontally and then vertically, take a turn, and produce a strong slash.

Hraesvelg moved slowly. He used several seconds in only one stance.

It was a training method human martial artists used when they wanted to increase the preciseness of a movement.

Actually, it was a meaningless training for Hraesvelg.

He was a kind of a God, just like the ancient dragon Nidhogg.

Because of that, although he now had the appearance of an old man, that wasn't the same for his real body.

A white eagle that had huge wings that could cover the sky.

That was Hraesvelg's real appearance. It was a body that couldn't use the spear and didn't even need to use it.

But Hraesvelg still trained in his spearmanship. It was to become similar to the great hero that remained in his thoughts.

A clean stab.

Hraesvelg pulled back his spear and let out a long sigh. He should have moved on to the next movement here, but he frowned and turned around. Young sparrows were flying towards him in a hurry.

“Hraesvelg-nim! Hraesvelg-nim!”

“It appeared! Appeared!”

“An infiltrator! Infiltrator!”

The sparrows flew around Hraesvelg's head and chirped noisily.

Hraesvelg extended his spear to make a spot for the sparrows to perch upon and then he smiled like a man and asked, "Is it the giants?"

"Not a giant nor a God! It's a dragon!"

"A black dragon! A black dragon!"

"A black dragon?"

Hraesvelg opened his eyes abruptly and asked back in an absurd tone. The sparrows held their breaths at the strong aura that was suddenly released.

"Ah, I'm sorry."

Hraesvelg received a sparrow that'd fallen down as it'd been paralyzed and then calmed down his aura.

The sparrows were able to barely breathe once again and fluttered their wings.

"It's really big!"

"It has poison in its body! And has four pair of wings! It also has four horns!"

Hraesvelg gulped dry saliva. He barely suppressed the aura that was about to come out reflexively and held his breath.

Four pair of wings and four horns.

A black dragon.

There was only one thing that appeared in his head. And right then, a black and huge bird came flying from far away.

"Hraesvelg-nim!"

It was Hraesvelg's aide, Vedrfolnir.

She usually transformed into a woman of long black hair first to express etiquette, but she didn't have the leisure to do so this time.

She yelled towards Hraesvelg while being in the shape of a bird.

“It-It has appeared!”

If the usually calm Vedrfolnir had gotten this excited, there was only one possible scenario.

“The black dragon, Nidhogg.”

The ancient dragon.

Hraesvelg’s own old enemy that was connected to him by fate.

His breathing became rough by its own accord. He felt that the beats of his heart had started to shake, and he clenched a fist in anticipation.

He remembered the fight against the great hero he could still remember clearly when he closed his eyes.

The excitement from that time surged up naturally, and an equally natural smile was slowly drawn upon his face.

A final and decisive battle.

A duel that put the fate of the world in the line.

The day he had waited for a thousand years!

He could die in this battle. His opponent was the ancient dragon that resented the world. Perhaps, this may become the last day for Hraesvelg.

But he had no regrets nor fear.

If he could pour all he was capable of.

“Let’s go. Lead the way, Vedrfolnir.”

His voice was strangely calm compared to his hot chest. His eyes were also calm.

The sparrows’ hearts were moved by the current, hero-esque image of Hraesvelg. Vedrfolnir was about to burst in tears, but she held them back. It was the moment her master had waited his

entire life for. She couldn't scatter her feelings with mere tears.

“I will lead the way, my loved master. King of the highest branch.”

Hraesvelg looked at the sky and took a deep breath. He calmed down his hot ambition that burned like the sun and jumped to the sky.

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (3) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 4: The highest branch (4)

The highest branch wasn't a branch like its name implied.

It was a small world that was stuck to the world tree just like Midgard and Asgard.

Hraesvelg flew in the sky in a majestic manner. Vedrfolnir flew a bit ahead than him to lead the way and the sparrows that were riding on her back chirped and yelled.

“The king is going!”

“The king is going to fight against the black dragon!”

The birds that had a good hearing heard them. The birds that were uneasy because of the sudden appearance of the black dragon got happy and flew up. They then followed the track of their king.

Hraesvelg didn't stop his citizens. It was because it would be better to have more witnesses in the great duel that would take place in a moment.

But of course, Hraesvelg wasn't planning on putting his citizens in danger in vain as he was a king. He was planning to not let them approach to a certain range as they could get swept in the battle against Nidhogg.

“My king! My king!”

“Our king!”

“King of birds!”

“The protector of the highest branch!”

The birds started to gather one by one and yelled together. Hraesvelg was a king that was loved by everyone as he protected the highest branch for a thousand years since he climbed to the throne.

They knew well about the black dragon Nidhogg thanks to the squirrel beast Ratatoskr.

The manifestation of all the evil in the world.

But they weren't afraid as the white eagle king was with them. They were sure he would defeat a mere black dragon!

Hraesvelg first headed to the core of the highest branch instead of going to the outer regions where the black dragon had appeared at. It wasn't to make more citizens follow him. It was because his real body was asleep in that place.

“Wake up my body. The time has come.”

When Hraesvelg stood in the air and mumbled something, the entire highest branch started to shake. The birds that were gathered were afraid but happy at the same time. They closed their beaks tightly and concentrated.

A huge flutter of a wing shook the world.

The two wings that got spread while breaking the silence hit the air once again and Hraesvelg's original body appeared.

The eyes of the sparrows that were riding on Vedrfolnir widened and that was the same for the ones that had already seen the real appearance of the king and for the ones that were looking at it for the first time.

If you connected the extremes of the wings, you could imagine that it was a big and wide plains. It was a huge existence that could create whirlwinds with a stroke of its wind.

Hraesvelg's original body was a kind of a magic armor just like Nidhogg's body.

A pure white eagle that had no stains.

Hraesvelg looked at his own body with a satisfied expression and then took a step. He stepped on the air and then moved to the head of his original body.

Vedrfolnir transformed into a beautiful woman and stood next to the king and the sparrows sat in her shoulder and praised his greatness.

Hraesvelg fluttered his wings once again. The ground shook once more and the white eagle crossed an incredible distance in a moment.

“It’s the king!”

“It’s the white eagle king!”

“The king is going to fight against the black dragon!”

The citizens of the highest branch yelled with all their strength. They were also really excited right now.

This was also Ratatoskr’s merit. The citizens imagined their king defeating the black dragon and fluttered their wings even more strongly.

And Hraesvelg finally reached the outside perimeter along his people. He opened his eyes sharply and looked at the black dragon.

A black dragon that had four pair of wings and four horns, just like the sparrows had said, was standing still. It looked just like a black and huge mountain.

‘It’s smaller than I thought.’

An eagle was an animal which wings was bigger than its body so just by looking at their size, it didn’t seem like there would be much difference between Hraesvelg and Nidhogg.

But perhaps, it was an obvious thing. Because Nidhogg was the fated enemy of Hraesvelg. The story would fit if they were of a similar size.

The dragon that had a poisonous fog around it didn’t move, as if it had really become a mountain. Hraesvelg made his citizens stop and flew ahead alone.

About 200 meters with Nidhogg.

It was a really long distance that people wouldn't be able to speak to each other but it was plentifully close for huge existences like Nidhogg and Hraesvelg.

Based on Ratatoskr's words, the normal thing would be for the dragon to launch a surprise attack first but it rather waited calmly for him.

It was a strange thing but Hraesvelg could find out the reason for it.

'It was also waiting for the destined duel.'

A smile spread in his mouth by its own.

Right, it was a battle against its old enemy connected by fate. No matter how much of an evil creature it was, it would at least want to duel properly.

Hraesvelg stood on the head of his original body and looked at Nidhogg's head. It was a distance that made people seem like dots but this didn't impede the eyes of the eagle king at all. He could see the scene of 200 meters ahead as if it was right in front of him.

There was a black haired warrior standing on the head of Nidhogg.

A tall stature and trained body. Clear features and a strong resolution in his face.

'Is that Nidhogg's essence?'

And it was at that moment. The one that was estimated to be Nidhogg's essence opened his mouth and shouted in a loud voice. It seemed like he had used some mystical power that his voice was heard clearly regardless of the distance.

"King of birds Hraesvelg! I'm called Lee Tae Ho, the commander of Idun's legion!"

"Idun's commander? Are you a warrior of Valhalla?"

"That's right!"

Hraesvelg's eyebrows twitched. It wasn't only because his guess that the man was Nidhogg's essence was wrong.

Displeasement showed in the voice of Hraesvelg, that looked at honor with importance.

“Bastard! Asgard fell in danger but it seemed that a traitor has appeared! For a warrior of Valhalla to join hands with Nidhogg!”

Hraesvelg had no relationship with Valhalla but it didn't matter. How could a warrior of a God join hands with the evil dragon?

Treason was especially one of the things Hraesvelg disliked a lot.

As he looked at the warrior with eyes filled with contempt, Tae Ho answered with his head high as if he didn't care at all.

“That's not the case! I'm a warrior of Valhalla that fights for Asgard and the nine realms, and the king of Gods Odin will prove this!”

“It's true. Idun's warrior is an outstanding warrior even in Valhalla.”

Odin, that was seated a bit farther from Tae Ho, said in a low voice. Hraesvelg couldn't see Odin as he was concentrated on the man estimated to be Nidhogg's essence and asked in a surprised voice.

“Odin? You were alive?”

“I could survive thanks to Idun's warrior.”

Odin smiled bitterly and said. His voice and looks didn't seem to be forced at all.

Hraesvelg got perplexed. He didn't know about Idun's warrior but it was hard to imagine the king of Gods to join hands with Nidhogg.

But this was reality occurring in front of them. Hraesvelg yelled bluntly.

“It’s fine whatever it is. I don’t care if it’s the king of Gods Odin or a warrior of Valhalla. The important thing is that the black warrior Nidhogg came to the highest branch!”

The white eagle Hraesvelg didn’t miss the main point of the problem.

Only the truth that Nidhogg had infiltrated the highest branch was important.

Tae Ho nodded. He yelled in a pleasant voice as it was flowing as he wanted to.

“You are right Hraesvelg. The important thing is Nidhogg. Come greet her.”

Tae Ho stood to a side and then, one of the rocks in Nidhogg’s head split up and two people showed up.

‘Women?’

They were both women. One was a tall and slender woman that had long black hair and the other one was a white haired woman that was dressed with the uniform of Valkyries.

You could know who was Nidhogg’s essence at a glance.

The white haired Valkyrie-Adenmaha, stopped at the entrance and the black haired woman-Nidhogg walked ahead.

But it was at that moment.

“Kyak!”

Nidhogg, that took a step with a stiff expression, was about to fall down. Adenmaha asked hurriedly as she got surprised.

“Are you fine?”

“Ye,yes. I’m fine. I didn’t fall down.”

For her to almost fall down as she tripped with a rock.

Nidhogg cleared her throat several times as it was embarrassing and then stood next to Tae Ho with still stiff movements. She then

looked at Hraesvelg and waved her hand shyly.

“Ah, hello? I’m Nidhogg. I wanted to meet you for a while. I also heard many things from Ratatoskr.....Although they weren’t good things, it’s fine as it’s all a misunderstanding. Uh, um.....ah...hi anyways!”

She hesitated for a moment and then increased her voice at the last part.

She even smiled brightly.

But the reply that Nidhogg wanted didn’t return. Odin turned his head and held his laughter and Tae Ho gritted his teeth to maintain his expression.

When Nidhogg became dispirited and shrugged her shoulders, a reply came from the side of Hraesvelg.

It was Vedrfolnir.

“Bastards! You dare to insult the king of the highest branch! You dare bring a fake to this place!”

There was nothing more evil. How could they bring a childish girl like that and say that she was Nidhogg’s essence!

Vedrfolnir glared at Tae Ho’s group with eyes filled with displeasement. But something completely unexpected came out from the mouth of Hraesvelg.

“She’s real?”

“What?”

“She is really Nidhogg.”

Vedrfolnir blinked as she didn’t understand what Hraesvelg was saying but he didn’t say anything else. Actually, Hraesvelg also wanted to yell like Vedrfolnir to bring the real deal.

But he could know.

Because he was connected to her by fate.

The one in front of him was Nidhogg indeed. She was the black dragon Nidhogg.

That's why Hraesvelg decided to think in another perspective. He spoke with the voice he managed to squeeze out.

"Nidhogg, stop acting. I heard that you were an evil existence but you have crossed the line. Your actions right now....aren't right manners when facing your destined enemy."

He had expected the fated duel while thinking that the dragon was an evil existence but wasn't it too much that it was acting like that?

But reality always surpassed your imaginations.

"Ni, Nidhogg didn't act. I'm.....not evil. Tae Ho master and Adenmaha said that Nidhogg was good."

Nidhogg spoke back while being aware of her surroundings. Adenmaha clenched her fist towards Nidhogg telling her to cheer up but that wasn't the case for the others. Odin couldn't endure his laughter and turned around and Tae Ho pinched his thigh.

"Th, that damned....."

Vedrfolnir trembled. She couldn't endure looking how her loved king got despised anymore.

"Nidhogg! I know too well that you have tried to make the world tree fall by eating the roots! How do you dare act as an innocent kid!"

"Ah, I didn't. I don't eat the roots. It's bitter and not tasty. The food Heda or Adenmaha makes are much more delicious."

It was true. Nidhogg really disliked eating the roots of the world tree.

Vedrfolnir staggered. Strength was taken away from her body as Nidhogg's words were heard sincerely.

"Yo, you bitch! I remember the curses you had told to Hraesvelg-

nim!”

“Ah, uh....I’m sorry! Ratatoskr forced me to do it. I’m sorry. It said that it would leave if I didn’t.....”

Nidhogg started to sob as she was really sorry. Her crying look looked really sad and poor.

“Hey, why are you making a kid cry! What did she do wrong!”

Adenmaha yelled. Vedrfolnir, that was already in a groggy state, put an even dumber face.

“Wh, what?”

Make a kid cry?

She wanted to deny it but she couldn’t. Looking at them from a distance, it just looked like Vedrfolnir was a bad girl that made a poor girl cry.

“My, my king.”

Vedrfolnir couldn’t take in the sudden situation and said with a trembling voice. But Hraesvelg also felt the same as her. No, he received a bigger shock than Vedrfolnir.

“H, how.....”

How is it that she isn’t her old fated enemy?

Wasn’t this the duel he had waited for a thousand years?

Hraesvelg felt dizzy. They hadn’t even started to exchange blows but the strength completely left his body. It felt like the sky turned yellow.

The sparrows that were sitting in the shoulder of Vedrfolnir got excited at the perplexity of their king. They, that were simple, thought that Nidhogg was acting. They crossed a distance of 200 meters in an instant suitable of being messengers and started to attack Nidhogg.

“Bad girl!”

“Bad girl!”

But they were still sparrows. The only thing sparrows the size of a fist could do was to fly around Nidhogg’s head and peak it.

Originally, he had to stop the sparrows. They were weak creatures that could die by one attack of an enraged enemy.

But there was no need to do so and that fact made Hraesvelg feel more tired.

“Kyak! Don’t! Don’t do it! It hurts! I don’t like things that hurt!”

Nidhogg couldn’t even think about hitting the sparrows and just covered her head.

Adenmaha and Tae Ho chased away the sparrows in her stead.

“A, an act.....”

Vedrfolnir couldn’t finish speaking. Hraesvelg closed his eyes tightly.

He didn’t want to see anymore. Didn’t want to hear anymore.

The fated enemy that was connected to him.

A destined duel against the devil that threatened the world.

It wasn’t something like this.

The duel he had dreamed for a long time wasn’t something like this.

Hraesvelg showed tears in a really long while. They were tears of remorse that flowed down from a deep part of his heart.

“My king.....”

Vedrfolnir also started to cry. She felt like her heart got torn when she looked at her king being sad. She felt so absent minded that she couldn’t even think about Ratatoskr.

But it was at that moment.

“Hraesvelg!”

Tae Ho yelled once again. He glared at Hraesvelg that turned to look at him reflexively and said.

“We need your help to take back Asgard. That’s why I have a proposal to make to you!”

Hraesvelg, that didn’t even want to think anything by now, didn’t show any reaction.

Tae Ho yelled once again.

“I request a duel with you as the commander of Idun. If I win, help us on taking back Asgard. As I am Nidhogg’s master, she will also participate in the duel.”

“Yes, yes. I can fight well if it’s with Tae Ho master!”

Nidhogg said. At that moment, Tae Ho activated the ‘one that controls dragons’ and at that time, the attribute of the aura covering Nidhogg’s body changed.

The black dragon Nidhogg.

A strong aura that suited an ancient dragon.

It was the same to when she stood on the battlefield of Niflheim. Hraesvelg got a hold of himself at the sharp aura and vitality also entered Vedrfolnir’s eyes.

“My king.”

Vedrfolnir spoke with a wet voice. It was only a bit but there was joy mixed in her voice.

There was a long distance to what they had imagined but the current Nidhogg was a good opponent.

Hraesvelg nodded. He clenched his fist and yelled.

“Good, good! Let’s have a duel!”

Hraesvelg calmed down himself and released the aura from inside his body. A strong aura surged up like fire just like what happened with Nidhogg.

The king of the highest branch indeed.

He wasn't an easy opponent at all. He was a really strong foe.

But Cuchulainn shook his head and put an evil smile.

'He didn't put a condition for when he won.'

After Tae Ho listened to the situation about Ratatoskr, he requested Odin to entrust the negotiations to him.

The reason was simple.

'I will be able to shake Hraesvelg just by making him duel with Nidhogg.'

And it turned out like he had thought. Hraesvelg, whose mind and body was a mess, ended up biting the bait Tae Ho had thrown.

But Tae Ho's fishing hadn't ended yet. There was the most important ending left.

"Hraesvelg! I have one more thing to tell you before the duel. I am a summoner at the same time i'm Idun's warrior. Will I be able to fight with my summons?"

"Do as you wish! It doesn't matter how many opponents there are!"

All the conditions had been set. Odin stood up and yelled.

"I, king of Gods Odin, will be a witness for this duel."

"I, Vedrfolnir, will also become a witness for my king."

Vedrfolnir spoke confidently and then took the sparrows and flew up high.

It was to not interfere with the duel.

Hraesvelg's original body flew to the sky. Hraesvelg, that was still standing on the head of his original body, looked down at Nidhogg and claimed as the king of the highest branch.

"Come how many you want! I am Hraesvelg, the king of the

highest branch!”

“Uooooo!”

“My king!”

“Our king!”

The citizens, that didn’t know of the conversation they had with Nidhogg, cheered. Tae Ho faced at that Hraesvelg with a satisfied face and then turned to look at Nidhogg and Adenmaha.

“Let’s start.”

Odin also left Nidhogg’s head, just like Vedrfolnir did, and then went to Merlin that was waiting in a distant place.

Tae Ho went to the heart room with Nidhogg.

Adenmaha and Rolo stood at the sides of Nidhogg.

‘It will be a short warfare. You won’t be able to endure long even if it’s you we are talking about.’

He wasn’t talking about the battle against Hraesvelg. It was about what Tae Ho was to do now.

Tae Ho nodded and sat at the chair in the heart room. He then took out a golden apple he received from Odin and cleared it in one go. The divine power of Idun, that was filling the apple, covered Tae Ho’s body.

[Saga: Idun’s warrior]

The amplified power of a God got amplified once again. He embraced Nidhogg, that was hugging him naturally, and then placed his hands on the keyboard and the mouse.

[Saga: Owner of flames]

[Saga: Owner of frost]

Rolo and Adenmaha transformed into Shootingstar and Javier. They were smaller than Nidhogg but they were still huge dragons.

Three dragons.

Hraesvelg twitched and Vedrfolnir gulped dry saliva.

But this wasn't the end. Tae Ho still had one more card.

[Saga: The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him]

The fake Nidhogg appeared. The citizens of the highest branch screamed at the appearance of the dragon that was identical to Nidhogg.

And one more thing to this.

The fake Adenmaha that appeared with the 'Warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him'.

[Saga: Owner of frost]

The fake Adenmaha turned into a fake Javier. It then let out a loud roar.

Five dragons.

It was just like Cuchulainn had warned. An overwhelming amount of divine power got spent just by maintaining it. He probably won't be able to maintain it for too long.

In addition, it was doubtful if the fake Nidhogg and Adenmaha would be able to move properly. If he couldn't control them properly, it would only be a waste of divine power.

'There's no way you would do something that stupid.'

Cuchulainn smirked and said. Tae Ho finished the last preparations instead of nodding.

[Saga: Legendary pro gamer]

The screen of the monitor changed. The first person point of view, that was Nidhogg's point of view, changed into a third person like RTS games.

Tae Ho would control Nidhogg and give simple orders to Adenmaha and Rolo. He would control the fake Adenmaha and

Nidhogg as when you controlled several units from an RTS game.

‘Bad guy. You really are a bastard. Really.’

Tae Ho nodded. He thanked Cuchulainn’s compliment and moved the mouse and the keyboard.

“Let’s go.”

[Saga: The one that controls dragons]

Nidhogg flinched and let out an exclamation. It was the same for Rolo and Adenmaha. They received orders from Tae Ho through the ‘one that controls dragons’ and ‘the legendary gamer’.

The duel started.

The five dragons flew up towards Hraesvelg.

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (4) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 5: The highest branch

(5)

The reason Tae Ho unleashed all the strength he possessed was simple.

“Hraesvelg is strong.”

Those were Odin’s words. And thanks to Ratatoskr’s testimony being added here, there was no doubt about Hraesvelg’s strength.

It was too different with Nidhogg.

The ancient dragon was one of the strongest existences that could bring destruction to the world but it didn’t know how to fight at all. In addition, Nidhogg was submissive and naive so her battle power declined even more. She was at a situation where she should be glad if she knew how to use a tenth of her strength.

But that wasn’t the same for Hraesvelg.

He was a protector that had guarded the highest branch for a thousand years. He had plenty of real battle experience and wasn’t the type to dodge battles like Nidhogg.

The one connected by fate to the black dragon Nidhogg.

The king of birds Hraesvelg.

He was strong. He wasn’t saying that he was Nidhogg’s destined enemy for nothing so Tae Ho could only use all of his strength from the start to defeat him.

‘First hit first win. The best thing is to defeat someone before they unleash their real strength.’

It was Ragnar’s teaching and the experience from when Tae Ho was a pro gamer was telling him the same thing.

If Hraesvelg got strong when he transformed, then defeat him before he can transform.

If it's an opponent that can manifest strong magic, defeat them before they can complete their magic.

Waiting until the opponent unleashed all of their strength or helping them so they were able to was only a thing that protagonists from fairy tales did.

‘That’s how adults fight.’

Cuchulainn said like a joke but his eyes were sharp and cold.

Tae Ho didn’t let himself get swept by his spirit. He maintained himself calm while five dragons flew towards the sky.

Just looking at the numbers, it was 5 vs 1 but reality wasn’t that simple.

First, the difference in size was different.

Hraesvelg was also a really huge creature, although not as big as the 2km long Nidhogg.

His wings when spread seemed like it passed the hundred meters. Even if eagles were animals which wings were bigger than their bodies, being that big meant that their bodies also reached tens of meters.

Just looking at the size, the only one that could face Hraesvelg on equal ground was Nidhogg.

Rolo and Adenmaha also reached tens of meters after they transformed into Shootingstar and Javier but they were still much smaller than Hraesvelg.

If the length was twice as big, then your body became a few more times that. Rolo and Adenmaha would be seen as children in Hraesvelg’s eyes.

And actually, Nidhogg was only comparable to Hraesvelg in size when looking at their bodies. She wasn’t as big as him when you also took the length of the spread wings into account.

‘The more you delay the more disadvantageous it is for you. You

have to crush him fast.'

Tae Ho also agreed to that. He glared at Hraesvelg through Nidhogg's eyes and then looked at the 3rd person screen that showed in the screen. He quickly moved his hands and ordered.

Hraesvelg spread his wings. He fluttered once and the ground shook. The moment he surged up, a strong wind became a wall and covered the heads of the five dragons.

It was an overwhelmingly strong wind. Tae Ho placed Nidhogg, that was the strongest, at the front and pierced through the wall of wind. Adenmaha and the fake Adenmaha stuck close to her and elevated and Rolo placed the fake Nidhogg in front of it and headed to Hraesvelg's rear.

Looking at humanity's long war record, the strategy in a war served to accomplish one objective.

Surround and defeat.

Big numbers would surround a minority and destroy them.

Even if the total number of the enemy was higher than the allies, they took into account that they were in their local territory where they were bigger in number.

Tae Ho was loyal to the basics. Nidhogg charged towards Hraesvelg and opened her mouth and Adenmaha and the fake Adenmaha, that easily passed through the wall of wind by sticking close to Nidhogg's tail, flew sideways and attacked Hraesvelg's sides.

The citizens of the highest branch gulped dry saliva and a part of them let out a gasp.

Right at that moment, a strong poison got fired from Nidhogg's mouth. It was a strong poison that seemed like it could melt everything it touched and even if the opponent dodges it, they can only get infected.

But Hraesvelg flew up once again instead of fearing it. A strong wind than the first time got generated to form a whirlwind and scattered the poison Nidhogg spat and a part of them even flew towards Adenmaha and the fake one.

Adenmaha and the fake Adenmaha hurriedly let out a breath and froze the poison and the wind altogether. Hraesvelg laughed and attacked Nidhogg. There was still the remnant of the poison but he just ignored it. He had no need to fear the remnants, now that it wasn't even the original attack.

Hraesvelg had prepared a long time for this battle. Although the shape was a bit different to what he was expecting, it wasn't that everything he had prepared had become useless.

The first time he realized Nidhogg and him were old enemies, he didn't save time on increasing his resistance towards poison. It was an obvious thing as he would be fighting the black poisonous dragon.

Hraesvelg pierced through the wind mixed with poison and attacked Nidhogg. It was a sharp and fast movement like a mother bird snatching her prey. But Tae Ho moved Nidhogg's body as if it was his own and dodged Hraesvelg's attack. He had barely managed to dodge it by twisting Nidhogg's body so he couldn't even think about counterattacking. But she wasn't the only one that was at this place.

Adenmaha and the fake Adenmaha, that flew on top of Hraesvelg's head fired an ice breath at the same time.

Hraesvelg snorted and showed a movement normal birds couldn't even imagine. He started to drop down from the sky and then turned his body at a 180 degree to surge up and hovered on top of the head of Adenmaha and the fake Adenmaha. This attack is what you call a barrel roll.

The both of them let out a gasp and got bewildered. Nidhogg also expressed perplexion with a really surprised face.

Hraesvelg fluttered his wings strongly. He tried to make Adenmaha and the fake Adenmaha crash by creating a strong wind.

The two dragons flew desperately and let out screams and Hraesvelg gathered all attention on him.

“My king!”

Vedrfolnir screamed.

Hraesvelg, that was about to attack Nidhogg after sweeping down the two dragons, knew instinctively what Vedrfolnir’s scream meant.

He turned his head and rolled his eyes. He released his spirit and checked his surroundings.

Adenmaha, that had pretended to act as if she was crashing, smirked. But it was already too late.

The fake Nidhogg rushed at Hraesvelg from his rear however Hraesvelg twisted his body and easily dodged the attack. But the fake Nidhogg was also merely a bait. The real attack was something else.

Rolo fell down from the sky. He was executing a body slam similar to a meteorite, befitting of his name of Shootingstar.

This attack was hard to dodge even in normal situations. In addition, it was even more so as he had turned to dodge the fake Nidhogg hurriedly.

But Hraesvelg wasn’t that easy either. He dodged in that situation and evaded a direct hit.

Rolo hit Hraesvelg’s wing. He barely managed to drop his speed before he crashed in the ground.

A trajectory of fire got drawn in the sky. Hraesvelg tried to flutter his wings and regain balance but this time, Nidhogg charged towards that Hraesvelg. She opened her mouth widely as if she was

trying to bite him instead of firing poison.

“Bastard!”

Hraesvelg roared and also opened his beak widely. It was to fire an overwhelming amount of magic power.

But Nidhogg didn't stop and Hraesvelg didn't hesitate and fired out his magic power. He fired away an incredible power that could seal even the movements of Hraesvelg himself!

[Saga: The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him]

Right at that moment, Tae Ho activated his saga. He changed the locations of Nidhogg and the fake one.

Hraesvelg's magic power hit the head of the fake Nidhogg and broke it down. And right after that Nidhogg, that had moved to the location of the fake Nidhogg, that was at the rear of Hraesvelg attacked him. This time, Hraesvelg had no means to dodge this attack even if it was him.

Nidhogg bit Hraesvelg's wing. Half of what she had bit were feathers but there were some fangs that had penetrated Hraesvelg's skin.

Nidhogg inserted poison in Hraesvelg's wings as if she had become a snake. Adenmaha and the fake one didn't stay still either. They sat on Hraesvelg's back, now that his movements were sealed, and pushed him to the ground.

Kwagang!

Hraesvelg crashed on the ground and a great shockwave swept the surroundings. An explosion shaking the ground got set off and a dust cloud arose to the sky.

The process became different but the results was as planned. Adenmaha fired an ice breath along with the fake Adenmaha and glued Hraesvelg to the ground. Nidhogg just focused on pressing down Hraesvelg instead of attacking him.

But even so, Hraesvelg was in good shape. As he put strength in his wings, a crack got formed in the ice made by Adenmaha. Nidhogg's body moved up and down.

Rolo fluttered his wings in the air and glared at Hraesvelg. It was to transform into a meteorite once again and attack him.

Adenmaha and the fake one fired out an ice breath once again. Their task was to restrict Hraesvelg's movements however they could.

Nidhogg moved from Hraesvelg's wings to his body. She spread her arms and legs widely and focused on pressing him down.

Hraesvelg tried to fly once again. The ice broke down and the three dragons shook.

But he couldn't fly this time either. Tae Ho gulped dry saliva and handed over the mouse and the keyboard to Nidhogg.

"I will leave it to you."

"Yes yes!"

Nidhogg nodded with an expression full of joy. She embraced the keyboard and the mouse and then closed her eyes and concentrated. Nidhogg's body pressed down Hraesvelg once again. It was funny to see as her movements seemed like she was swimming in the ground but the effects were enough. Hraesvelg couldn't even move.

The objective of this battle was to make Hraesvelg into their ally. Not to kill him.

Nidhogg didn't cover poison in her body just like when she fought against Hrumbak. It was to evade damaging Adenmaha, that was also inflicting damage to Hraesvelg, but there was also another objective.

The fake Adenmaha disappeared and Rolo descended from the sky to fill that empty spot and stepped on Hraesvelg. The moment

he let out a groan filled with rage, the chest of Nidhogg's body opened with a clicking sound.

It was Tae Ho. He started to jump in the air the moment he got out of the heart room. He calculated the remaining power of a God he had and headed to Hraesvelg's head.

Hraesvelg's essence.

He didn't enter somewhere like Nidhogg's heart room. He was standing on the head of his original body perhaps to attack the dragon that was stepping on his back himself. It was just like Tae Ho had expected.

Hraesvelg, that was about to attack Adenmaha, noticed Tae Ho approaching him. He grabbed a spear of air he made with magic power and glared at Tae Ho.

Suppress the essence and end the fight.

It was the same as with Nidhogg. But Hraesvelg wasn't Nidhogg. His essence, that had polished his martial arts for a hundred years wasn't weak at all.

"You!"

Hraesvelg roared towards Tae Ho but there was joy in his eyes.

It was because he was displeased that Tae Ho used many dragons in a duel but he liked Tae Ho's spirit that got out of Nidhogg and faced him head on.

"Come! Owner of the black dragon!"

And perhaps, this was the image of the long waited duel Hraesvelg was waiting for a long time. Hraesvelg remembered his battle against the Great hero a hundred years ago.

In the other hand Tae Ho felt a sense of incongruity as he charged towards Hraesvelg. And he then realized the reason for it and got perplexed.

'Scathach's style techniques?!'

The stance Hraesvelg was taking was similar to Scathach's techniques.

Cuchulainn said quickly.

'It's a subspecies of it. It seems like he only saw it with his eyes and developed it to his own style.'

Originally, Cuchulainn was usually like the dumb brother of the town, but he was different only in battles. It was a surprisingly fast and precise analysis.

'I don't know how this happened but it rather turned out well. A subspecies won't be able to beat the real Scathach's style techniques at all!'

Tae Ho also agreed. He looked at Hraesvelg with the insight in Scathach's style techniques, that couldn't be contained in a subspecies. He also took out his spear to completely suppress Hraesvelg, that was also holding a spear.

Gae Bolg.

The spear of death that was like the incarnation of the prince of light Cuchulainn!

And it was at that moment. Hraesvelg opened his eyes widely and let out a shocked voice.

"Th, that spear is!"

He knew it. The shape had gotten a bit different but he had certainly seen it before.

Hraesvelg couldn't speak as he was really surprised. It was to the point that he couldn't even breathe properly, although for a brief moment.

And Tae Ho didn't let that opening go to waste. He got loyal to Ragnar's and Cuchulainn's teachings.

Strike first, win first.

He had plenty of time to hear why Hraesvelg got surprised at a later time.

The attack that was like thunder that started from Tae Ho's hands extended to Hraesvelg's chest.

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (5) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 6: The highest branch

(6)

The higher your comprehension you had in the sentence of the Milesians, you could unleash a higher skill compared to that.

Tae Ho had increased the comprehension he had towards almost all weapons significantly in the two years he spent in the tower of shadows.

Gae Bolg was especially a weapon that needed a high comprehension rate but the reason Tae Ho was able to use it was because he used it frequently but also because he had Cuchulainn's help.

Cuchulainn transmitted his strength through the sentence of the Milesians. He made Tae Ho's spearmanship much stronger and quicker.

Wind walk.

One of the three stages Scathach's style techniques had.

The moment Tae Ho charged forward, he became the wind. No, he became an existence quicker than gale and crossed the air.

The wind walk wasn't simply a technique that granted you fast movements.

It gave you a natural movement like the wind.

That was why it was hard to catch. Even if you were someone that could catch up to that speed, your reactions became dull by one step in front of the wind walk.

In addition, Hraesvelg was currently taken aback with something else.

The moment he realized Tae Ho's stab, Gae Bolg was already stabbing his chest. The straight attack that was like thunder

entered Hraesvelg's chest regardless of the strength behind it.

“Kuhok!”

Hraesvelg got pushed back helplessly and vomited blood. It was only this much as he only received the tip of the spear and not the complete blade. If he had been stabbed completely it wouldn't have ended with this much.

Hraesvelg didn't groan even at the pain that seemed like his chest turned to dust. He rather opened his eyes widely and glared at Tae Ho.

Water flow.

Tae Ho used Scathach's style techniques instead of attacking Hraesvelg immediately. It seemed like he was just standing in place but Hraesvelg didn't look at it that way. Tae Ho looked like the water of a flowing river that couldn't be grabbed by your hands.

‘No way.’

Hraesvelg felt his consciousness dim once again. It was unavoidable. He had seen those stances in the past.

The duel against the great hero he would never forget.

‘So that is the case.’

Hraesvelg got sure of it. Idun's commander was certainly a successor of the great hero. His spear and the techniques he used were proof of it.

Hraesvelg laughed. The pain in his chest still remained but his smile didn't fade away and even let out a strange sound.

It was a duel he didn't like.

It was because the duel he had dreamed for a long time had dissipated pitifully and just accepted the duel half heartedly.

But it was now different.

He wanted to fight. He wanted to execute the skills he had

polished for a hundred years to the successor of the great hero.

“Ahh, ahhhhhhh!”

Hraesvelg took a stance naturally. It was a stance that was similar to Water flow.

Cuchulainn opened his eyes sharply and said.

‘Energy is returning to his body. It seems like he has just turned on his engine. So he was a pervert that enjoyed getting hit.....’

To smile like that after he got hit that much.

But of course, half of it was a joke. He had cracked that joke to ease Tae Ho’s tension.

‘Just by looking at his aura, he has enough to easily overcome a superior ranked warrior.’

Hraesvelg’s essence was strong. His level was different to Nidhogg, that trampled alone while walking.

‘Perhaps, I gave him more time for nothing.’

The reason Tae Ho didn’t attack right after the attack was because this duel wasn’t meant to take his life.

‘But it doesn’t matter.’

Cuchulainn smirked and Tae Ho nodded.

Hraesvelg’s aura was certainly strong. Just looking at his stance, he looked like a martial artist that has trained for a long time.

It was a case that one became strong by polishing himself through countless trainings. He was a skilled warrior that ordinary superior ranked warriors wouldn’t be able to beat.

But it was like Cuchulainn had said. Tae Ho didn’t feel even a slightest bit of fear.

A subspecies of Scathach’s style techniques.

It was Hraesvegl’s martial arts. He was a superior warrior that

had developed himself by his own and reached a considerable level.

But Tae Ho didn't look at him that way. He could obviously see the secrets behind the technique and know its weaknesses just by looking at it.

And the reason for that was because Hraesvelg's martial arts was a subspecies of Scathach's style techniques.

Hraesvelg's spear was fast. It was sharp and also strong. But it couldn't hit Tae Ho. Tae Ho perfectly dodged Hraesvelg's attack as if he already knew where his spear was going to hit. He rather aimed for the moment Hraesvelg wouldn't be able to dodge and unleashed a perfect counter attack.

It was a one sided fight. If you saw it at a glance, it looked like Hraesvelg was pouring down attacks and pushing back Tae Ho but that wasn't actually the case.

Hraesvelg only hit the air and wasted strength. Each one of his attacks had strength that shook the ground with its after shock but it didn't matter as they didn't hit. There were times that his spear clashed against Tae Ho's but there was no sound that tore the air. It was because Tae Ho swiftly pushed away Hraesvelg's spear as if water pushed you away.

Hraesvelg increased the speed behind his attacks to increase the number of attacks but it was pointless. The faster and fiercer his attacks became, the more strength and stamina he spent.

Tak! Tak! Tak!

The shaft of Gae Bolg hit Hraesvelg's shoulders, thighs and back of his hand. The attacks perfectly cut off the flow of Hraesvelg's attacks so his techniques broke consecutively.

There was joy and despair mixed in Hraesvelg's face. The duel against the great hero was giving him endless happiness but the fact that he couldn't even touch the great hero after a hundred

years of training made him feel despair.

Tae Ho calmed his breathing. He dispelled Rolo's and Adenmaha's transformation and sent back the fake Adenmaha but he had used too much power of a God. The situation could be turned around if he didn't end it now.

Lightning strike.

Tae Ho, that was on the defensive, turned to the offensive and Hraesvelg's posture broke with just that.

Tae Ho pushed back Hraesvelg mercilessly. The blade of Gae Bolg, that was said to contain the power of a curse, was really sharp. Hraesvelg got covered in wounds in an instant and ended up dropping his spear.

Rock smash.

Tae Ho unleashed the last attack on Hraesvelg's thigh. Hraesvelg couldn't endure it anymore and collapsed.

Hraesvelg looked up at Tae Ho. Gae Bolg was already at his neck.

"Kill me."

Hraesvelg closed his eyes and said but Tae Ho put away his spear and shook his head. He contained the words that would work the best to the current Hraesvelg.

"You are the king of the highest branch. Your life isn't yours alone so treasure it."

The effects of Bragi's rune was tremendous. Even he thought that it was a cheesy line but he said it really naturally and in a really cool way at that.

Cuchulainn let out a groan as if it was painful but it was different for Hraesvelg. He put a really surprised face and then got moved. He smiled as he didn't only lose in skills but also in heart and said.

"I have lost. It's your victory."

It was a fresh smile towards the clean duel, rather than despair about defeat.

‘You are putting that arrogant posture until the end.’

Tae Ho listened to Cuchulainn’s snort and put away Gae Bolg. He extended his hand towards Hraesvelg and said.

“It was a nice duel. I have also learned a lot.”

Hraesvelg would be fighting with them so it was a good thing in the end. In addition, Tae Ho wouldn’t have been able to use that easily if Hraesvelg hadn’t used a subspecies of Scathach’s techniques.

Hraesvelg looked at Tae Ho’s hand with a dumbfounded face for a moment and then smirked again. He put a smile and grabbed his hand.

“You really do look like a hero. Suitable of being the successor of the great hero.”

“The successor.....of the great hero?”

Actually, Tae Ho was also curious. How was it that Hraesvelg could use a subspecies of Scathach’s techniques? And when did he see Gae Bolg?

Hraesvelg nodded at Tae Ho’s question. He stood up while staggering a bit because of his thigh and then asked back.

“That’s right. Aren’t you the sucessor of the great hero? You are using his spear and even his martial arts.”

Gae Bolg and Scathach’s style techniques.

By now, he couldn’t not now who Hraesvelg was referring to. But Tae Ho rather asked with a careful tone.

“Uh...Are you talking about the prince of light Cuchulainn?”

“Prince of light...That’s right. That person was also called that way.”

Hraesvelg spoke with a voice filled with emotions and looked at a far away place.

“It’s something that has already passed a hundred years. I have gone down to Asgard in the Great War to test my skills. I met the great hero back then and received a teaching from him.”

The memory of that time was still clear.

“My essence couldn’t defeat the great hero. It ended up in a messy defeat like right now and I couldn’t endure that situation as I faced my first defeat since I was born. I forced him to make him kill me as I have lost. But do you know what he said?”

There was no way Tae Ho could know. Hraesvelg smirked as he put an expression that he didn’t know well.

“He said the same thing as you. To treasure my life as a king. That my body doesn’t only belong to me.”

‘Indeed, those are cool words suitable to me.’

Cuchulainn, that had criticized Tae Ho when he had said it, now spoke with a satisfied face.

But Tae Ho didn’t care that much. It was because there was something more important than that.

‘Cuchulainn?’

If he had met with Hraesvelg before, shouldn’t he have told them?

In addition, it seemed like Hraesvelg deeply respected him. Perhaps, it may have become possible to turn him into an ally without making this much of a fuss.

Cuchulainn snorted at Tae Ho’s urging.

‘I don’t know, I can’t remember. Do you know how many guys challenged me? I don’t know if it would have been a beauty like Nidhogg. How can I remember an old man?’

In addition, Cuchulainn was crazy about taking revenge for Scathach and Erin. Actually, Cuchulainn couldn't even remember the Great War properly by now.

Tae Ho sighed inwardly and activated Bragi's rune. He contained words, that had become much cooler than before, to move Hraesvelg's heart.

"Hraesvelg, king of birds and owner of the highest branch. The name of this spear is the spear of death Gae Bolg. This is the strongest spear of Erin that has been created by the queen of the land of darkness Scathach and gave it to Cuchulainn, that was her disciple and the the strongest warrior of Erin; the prince of light.

"Ohh..that story....."

Hraesvelg got sincerely moved. It was partly because of Bragi's rune but it was possible because Hraesvelg really admired Cuchulainn.

Tae Ho paused for a moment to put an expression filled with sorrow and spoke with a tone that was enough to shake Hraesvelg's heart.

"The prince of light Cuchulainn.....The great hero has sacrificed himself in the Great War to save countless people. You could say that his end was a really heroical one. If he hadn't been there, the Great War would have ended with the victory of the giants."

It was a voice that seemed like he would shed tears as soon as he closed his eyes.

Hraesvelg put a really moved face but Cuchulainn's reaction was completely different.

'Hey, what's wrong with you? Are you hurt somewhere?'

It was a voice that had bewilderment and embarrassment mixed in it.

Tae Ho ignored Cuchulainn's words like he usually did and

continued to speak.

“The Great hero has died like that but he chose to struggle for eternity. Can you see this spear? The great hero has left his soul inside of Gae Bolg in his last moment. It was for the sake of the next generation.”

“Ohh. Then in this moment, he’s also.....?”

“That’s right. The soul of the great hero resides in this spear.”

Tae Ho raised Gae Bolg high. There was eagerness in Hraesvelg’s eyes.

“The great hero has said. That he clearly remembers you. He says that he’s happy that you look the same although a hundred years have passed. He also says that your skills have increased by leaps and bounds.”

‘Hey, when did I say that huh? You are really scamming here. Is a cheat like saga not enough for you?’

But Cuchulainn’s yell didn’t reach Tae Ho this time either. Hraesvelg took a breath and trembled because he got moved.

“The great hero.....!”

“That’s right. He is also admiring that you really look like a king.”

“Hoho, hohoho.”

Hraesvelg laughed with an embarrassed face. It seemed like he was trying to contain it but you could clearly see that he didn’t know how to act because of how happy he was.

‘He really likes it. Hey, tell him clearly. Scathach’s style technique is the strongest martial art but that isn’t the case for a mere subspecies. But rather, it’s clear that the subspecies has a limit as it doesn’t contain an essence. It will rather be better for you to learn another martial arts.’

“The great hero says that your talent is really regretful. The

teacher of the great hero is currently in Idun's legion. He wants to introduce you to her."

"Ohh! The teacher of the great hero!"

Hraesvelg's eyes shone and at the same time, Cuchulainn raised his voice.

'Hey! When did I! Do you think I will leave an old man stick to our master?!'

It seemed like he would decline but for the reason to be that.

Tae Ho, that got bewildered, couldn't ignore Cuchulainn's words this time. He asked back unconsciously.

'What about me then?'

'You already have an owner! And one that is grabbing you tightly at that!'

He couldn't decline. Because of that, Tae Ho decided to concentrate on Hraesvelg once again instead of discussing with Cuchulainn.

"But it's impossible right now. Valhalla, where the teacher of the great hero resides, is currently being under attack from the giants."

A voice filled with sorrow came out once again. It seemed like he had no talent in acting but he was acting perfectly right now maybe because of Bragi's rune.

Hraesvelg fell completely for Tae Ho's act and put a serious expression.

And Tae Ho saw that Hraesvelg was a fish he had almost caught.

"Hraesvelg, owner of the highest branch and king of birds. The great hero needs your strength. Can you accompany us?"

Hraesvelg nodded slowly at the question that was filled with sincerity. He put a smile suitable of a hero and said.

“In the first place, the conditions of the duel was that and I have lost. I have to keep my promise.”

It had already been decided since he said that he had lost.

But regardless of that, the reason Tae Ho put effort was to make Hraesvelg sincerely help Asgard.

And Tae Ho's plan had worked really well. Hraesvelg claimed in a loud voice to be heard throughout the entire highest branch.

“The king of birds Hraesvelg tells you. From now on, the highest branch will lend its strength to Asgard!”

It was the decision of their king and the citizens of the highest branch had already seen the battle.

In their eyes, the battle between Tae Ho and Hraesvelg, was a cool duel that had ended by a tiny margin. They could only read the auras as they were really far and Tae Ho had induced it to make it look that way.

It wasn't a completely messy defeat.

Their king had faced many enemies confidently and in the end showed a hero cleanly accepting his defeat.

Because of that, the citizens of the highest branch didn't oppose to the decision of their king.

They claimed that they would follow their king.

It was possible as Hraesvelg was a king that got loved by everyone.

“Thank you.”

Tae Ho requested to shake hands like he could relax a bit. Hraesvelg turned to look at his people after lightly shaking their hands and said with a low voice.

“A, also.....”

“Please, tell.”

Hraesvelg cleared his throat as Tae Ho also spoke with a low voice. He checked his surroundings and spoke quickly as he saw that Vedrfofnir was flying towards them.

“Uh.....Will I be able to speak with the great hero at a later time? Not through you but directly.”

Hraesvelg flushed. His eyes were shining like a kid that couldn't hide his shyness.

Tae Ho held back his laughter and spoke seriously.

“I will try to make a place for the two of you soon.”

‘I don't want to, no. I don't. A shy grandpa. Isn't it too much? Why is it Nidhogg for you and Hraesvelg for me?’

‘Doesn't this mean that justice exists in this world?’

Cuchulainn cursed out at Tae Ho's answer but fortunately, it was only heard by him.

Tae Ho turned his head. Adenmaha was flying towards them while riding on Rolo and beyond them, Nidhogg was looking at their direction with a nervous face after opening the chest of her body. She was holding a keyboard and a mouse in her embrace.

“It ended up well.”

Adenmaha said and Tae Ho agreed to it. He made a hand gesture towards Nidhogg, that wanted to come to him.

Nidhogg smiled brightly at that gesture and Cuchulainn despaired once again at that beautiful and bright smile.

‘This isn't fair!’

But it was only heard for him this time too.

Odin and Vedrfofnir approached them.

It was the moment Asgard and the highest branch made an alliance.

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (6) > End

Episode 41/Chapter 7: The highest branch

(7)

“I really like Tae Ho master!”

The first thing Nidhogg did after putting down the keyboard and the mouse was run towards Tae Ho. But there was a swift hand that looked as if someone was snatching the prey. It was Adenmaha.

“I told you to differentiate the time and place, didn’t I?”

Adenmaha stopped Nidhogg from hugging Tae Ho by grabbing her clothes and said with sharp eyes. The battle had just ended and there was a high probability for them to start speaking about Asgard after Odin and Vedrfofnir arrived.

And most of all, there was a need to fix her habit that tried to hug Tae Ho wherever she wanted.

But Nidhogg just blinked at few times at Adenmaha’s scolding and then smiled brightly.

“Then at least Adenmaha!”

“At least? You really!”

“I like your whines. Hey, where did you learn....Kyak! Where are you touching?!”

Nidhogg embraced Adenmaha so she raised her voice and struggled.

And there was someone that looked that scene with warm eyes.

‘Why is it. Usually, I would be looking at them with a satisfied look but why is it that only tears come out?’

Fortunately, the only one that could hear Cuchulainn’s dispirited voice was Tae Ho. Hraesvelg, that had no way to know about Cuchulainn’s loss of strength, looked at Nidhogg with a

complicated look and then turned to look at Tae Ho.

“Idun’s commander, predecessor of the great hero. Before going into details, may I speak with Nidhogg?”

Odin and Vedrfolnir were yet to arrive. Tae Ho turned to look at Odin’s side for a moment and nodded.

“It’s fine if she says so.”

“It’s fine. I wanted to speak with Hraesvelg for a long time!”

Nidhogg agreed immediately. Adenmaha gave up struggling in her embrace and dropped her shoulders. It was obvious as Nidhogg’s essence was also strong, compared to Adenmaha when she was in her Goddess appearance.

Hraesvelg let out a sigh and fixed his expression. It was an expression suitable of the king of the highest branch.

“Vedrfolnir.”

Hraesvelg said in a low voice as soon as Odin and Vedrfolnir arrived. Vedrfolnir understood his meaning just with the look in his eyes and tone and bowed.

“Yes, my king. I will prepare it.”

Vedrfolnir started to recite a chant in a low voice. Hraesvelg then spoke to Odin.

“Odin, I will first take care of this side.”

“Do it. I will wait.”

The God of magic Odin realized what magic Vedrfolnir was preparing with a glance. Because of that, he agreed to Hraesvelg’s request without even thinking about it. It was because what she was going to do now would be of help and not obstruct them the slightest.

Hraesvelg spoke to Nidhogg once again.

“Nidhogg, Vedrfolnir has the ability to read the memories of the

one she touches. May we look at your memories?”

Nidhogg blinked at the polite question and then turned to look at Tae Ho and Adenmaha as if trying to get an answer.

Tae Ho nodded and Adenmaha whispered in a low voice.

“Do it if you want to, and don’t if you don’t want it.”

The right to choice was on Nidhogg.

She thought for a moment and then let Adenmaha go from her embrace. She then faced Hraesvelg with a slightly nervous expression.

“It’s fine if you read my memories. What do I have to do?”

“The only things we will be able to read will be the things that appear on the surface of your consciousness. That’s why you just have to think about Ratatoskr.”

“I understand, I will try.”

Nidhogg closed her eyes tight and started to think about Ratatoskr. Then, her eyebrows twitched and put on a depressed expression like she would cry at any moment.

This side of Nidhogg was still too unfamiliar for Vedrfolnir. She showed bewilderment for a moment and then grabbed Nidhogg’s hand.

Hraesvelg approached Vedrfolnir and grabbed her arm. It was to see Nidhogg’s memories with Vedrfolnir as the medium.

It didn’t last that long. After about twenty minutes passed, Vedrfolnir opened her eyes with an exhausted look. There was sympathy and pity in her eyes rather than bewilderment.

And that was also the same for Hraesvelg. He stroke Nidhogg’s head swiftly and said gently.

“It must have been hard on you, Nidhogg.”

“I’m fine now. I have Tae Ho master, Cuchulainn oppa,

Adenmaha and Odin-nim.”

Nidhogg smiled like a fool. She leaned her head a bit towards Hraesvelg’s big hand as if she didn’t dislike it.

“Right, how good.”

Hraesvelg stroke her head a few more times and then turned towards Odin. His eyes now had bluntness instead of pity.

“Odin, I want to take care of Ratatoskr before speaking about the alliance. Can you wait for me?”

“Of course.”

Odin also agreed this time. There was an order to all things, and Odin also thought that they had to take care of Ratatoskr before talking about the alliance.

Hraesvelg’s original body flew up.

The place he headed to was the outskirts of the highest branch, the place where Ratatoskr was resting.

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Hraesvelg’s movements weren’t stealthy at all. The gale generated by the stroke of his wings swept the sky and the ground and was so strong that you could realize that the king of birds was approaching even from far away.

Ratatoskr curled down and trembled. The groans and screams from Ratatoskr became louder along the sound of the wings that also increased.

Ratatoskr wanted to flee right now, but its feet didn’t move. It was because Odin had placed several seals before he departed.

It couldn’t flee even though death was approaching.

Ratatoskr started to sweat like rain and finally, the king of birds arrived.

“H, hiiik!”

Ratatoskr started to breathe roughly and curled down at the huge shadow that covered everything. It couldn't face the white eagle that was looking down at it.

But it was impossible to ignore him forever.

“Ratatoskr.”

Hraesvelg called it out. Ratatoskr grinded its teeth and then raised its head. It yelled as if cursing.

“I was wrong! I was wrong! No, it's not my fault! It's rather yours!”

There was fear and rage in Ratatoskr's face. It glared at Hraesvelg and cried.

“You wanted it! You wanted Nidhogg to be an overwhelmingly evil existence! For your long enemy to be a strong existence! That's why I did it! I just said words you wanted to hear!”

“This bastard.....!”

Vedrfolnir got enraged but it was different for Hraesvelg. He didn't lose his composure until the end. There wasn't even a slightest bit of trembling in his eyes when he extended his big hand to restrain Vedrfolnir.

“Ratatoskr. There's something you are misunderstanding.”

The calm voice that was heard from the sky made Ratatoskr shut its mouth. Ratatoskr felt a terrible fear at the voice even though it didn't contain killing intent or rage.

Hraesvelg continued speaking.

“It's true that I hoped for that. It's true that I wanted my destined enemy to be a strong one and had the rights for me to defeat it. But even so, there's something that hasn't changed.”

The essence of its sin.

The biggest mistake Ratatoskr made.

“It’s that you have toyed with the king of the highest branch for a really long time.”

He didn’t force him to say that it was a lie.

What Hraesvelg wanted was real information about Nidhogg, not fake stories that would satisfy his vanity.

Ratatoskr had gained many things by telling stories about Nidhogg. He enjoyed the wealth and prosperity in the highest branch for a really long time.

“And one more thing.”

Displeasement appeared in Hraesvelg’s voice for the first time. And that was something obvious.

Hraesvelg also had a bit of fault as he got tricked by Ratatoskr. He couldn’t completely blame it.

But what it was different to the thing he would say now.

Hraesvelg, that wanted to resemble the warriors of the temple and the great hero, hated injustice and favored justice. You could say that it was a quality he was born with.

That’s why Hraesvelg got furious. He expressed a greater displeasure than when he got toyed with.

“Why did you harass Nidhogg?”

His voice was cold. It was like a cold fire.

Ratatoskr couldn’t even breathe properly and this time, it couldn’t even make an excuse.

“You had no proper reason to harass her. What did you gain by doing that? Aside from filling up your desire.”

He had just read a fragment of Nidhogg’s memory but it was terrible and cruel. One could think that it was merely a childish prank but Hraesvelg didn’t think like that. It was a harass that had continued for a thousand years.

ABusing and toying the one that only looked at it earnestly.

He couldn't forgive it. Hraesvelg released his aura and the entire highest branch shook as if reacting to the rage of its king.

Ratatoskr let out suffocating sounds. That was the only thing it could do.

He would die.

He would really die now.

Ratatoskr was filled with anger. Just what had he done wrong? Why did it have to die like this!

"You can't kill it!"

A voice was heard at that time. It was Nidhogg. She hurriedly grabbed Hraesvelg's arm and pledged while bowing.

"Y, you can't kill it. No. Save Ratatoskr. I'm begging you."

Nidhogg was crying. It was hard to explain but Ratatoskr was a precious existence for her. It was because Ratatoskr was the only one that had visited her regardless of the situation.

Hraesvelg looked at Nidhogg with regretful eyes and Odin also said.

"I'm also opposed to killing Ratatoskr. It still has its uses."

There was also something they had to investigate.

Hraesvelg nodded. He had already known that Nidhogg and Odin would stop him.

"I want to tear you to shreds for having toyed with me for a long time but I will leave your execution for now. I will trap you in a prison for now."

"No! No! I don't want to! Nidhogg! Save me! Help!"

Ratatoskr's despair got farther. Nidhogg breathed roughly and Hraesvelg's big hand got placed in her head.

“Nidhogg.”

Nidhogg raised her head and looked at Hraesvelg. He spoke to the one connected by fate with him in a low voice.

“That doesn’t change. Rather than thanking you for having saved its life, it would be blaming you instead. Saying that all of this happened because you got out of the roots.”

There were people that won’t change in the world. It’s nature, that harassed Nidhogg for a thousand years, was like a rotten sewer. It was impossible to make it change.

“I.....know.”

Nidhogg mumbled with a depressed face. She also knew this fact. That’s why she couldn’t help but cry.

“Right, that’s enough then.”

Hraesvelg stroke her head a few more times and let out a long sigh. He faced Odin and Tae Ho once again as a king.

“The conversation became long. Let’s return now and talk about the alliance.”

He would keep the promise.

Hraesvelg’s original body flew up once again.

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The talk about the alliance didn’t last that long compared to what they thought. It was because Hraesvelg requested to rest for a moment.

Taking back Asgard wasn’t an easy thing. Odin gladly accepted that proposal as Niflheim and Midgard also had to cooperate. He used his crows to transmit the news to the two places.

Because of that, Tae Ho relaxed at the lodging Hraesvelg decided for him. The room that had a high ceiling and had a big terrace was a really fantastic scenery but he couldn’t enjoy it properly.

‘Right, it’s time to rest by now.’

He had kept running since he left the roots.

And he finally reached the rest point. He had entered the turning point that was Asgard’s recapture.

He had spent an overwhelming amount of power of a God against the battle against Hraesvelg and the mental fatigue he had accumulated and had been ignored flowed down all at once so he felt like he would collapse at any moment.

Tae Ho lied down in the bed that was placed alone in the middle of the room. He took out Heda’s letter instead of falling asleep immediately.

Idun’s and Heda’s story.

The letter of the two people that was filled with worry towards him.

Heda believed that Tae Ho would be alive. She was earnestly craving for it and that was the same for Idun.

But now, he got able to go to rescue the two of them. There was no need to bury his worry towards them.

‘Hello once again?’

He felt like he could hear Heda’s voice and the gentle smile of Idun popped up in his head.

Nidhogg glanced at that Tae Ho from a distance. She sat at the entrance of Tae Ho’s room and mumbled with a depressed face.

“Heda is too strong. I don’t think I will be able to beat her.....”

She didn’t know if beating was the correct expression but she felt like that. A voice was heard next to her the moment she dropped her shoulders with a teary face.

“What about Adenmaha?”

“Adenmaha.....mm, I think I will be able to beat her.”

“Because she is easy to deal with?”

“Yes, she is eas.....no, no. She’s not. Not at all. I will say that she’s not!”

Nidhogg, that had been mumbling unconsciously at herself, stood up and hurriedly denied it. However it was too late. Adenmaha, that sat next to Nidhogg and spoke with a voice to induce an answer from her, spoke with a fierce voice.

“You will? Ugh, you really!”

“It hurts! Hurts! Hurts!”

The war between dragons that has resumed once again.

Usually, Cuchulainn would have already cracked a joke by now but he was silent today. It was because he was thinking about his only master.

Tae Ho closed his eyes slowly. He then hit his chest twice and said in a low voice.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

And for Idun and Heda.

The morning after four days.

The black dragon Nidhogg and the king of birds Hraesvelg left the highest branch and headed to Midgard.

< Episode 41 – The highest branch (7) > End

Episode 42/Chapter 1: Great counter attack (1)

There were ten realms.

Erin, that was one of them, got destroyed and they became nine.

Asgard, Olympus and the Temple.

Three of the remaining nine realms. Muspelheim and the adjacent realms that could be said to be the headquarters of the ones that hoped for the destruction of the world.

The three realms were fighting.

A battle against the ones hoping for the destruction of the world was the same for the three realms.

Then, what about the remaining six realms?

Would they be the same as the three realms that were at the front?

Would they also be fighting?

Asgard didn't have the leisure to turn to look at the six realms that was behind it.

They couldn't maintain a continuous and rigid cooperation between Olympus and the Temple.

The wall that existed in between a world wasn't something that could be surpassed easily.

Erin got destroyed among the ten realms. It got destroyed the fastest and disappeared.

And there were now nine realms remaining.

And right at this moment.

The fire of destruction was surging once again. It surged up to burn down another world.

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The magician king Utgard Loki leaned on a broken wall and looked at the direction where Valhalla was.

The frozen time magic was protecting Valhalla. It was a sealing magic that was much stronger than the Great barrier spread in Midgard.

About twenty days ago, several disasters shook Asgard.

Heavy rains, floods, maddening infections and great earthquakes.

The one among them that inflicted the most damage was the great earthquake. The aftereffect that shook the entire Asgard made countless fortresses fall down even before fighting with their enemy.

The magician king, that had dealt damage to the core of the world tree and created a great earthquake, tried to conquer Valhalla in a hurry.

The warriors of Valhalla resisted desperately on top of the broken fortresses but it was futile.

The world wolf took the lead and countless giants followed it. Even the giant kings, that were saving their strength by hiding in Jotunheim, helped the magician king as if this was the right moment.

The magician king smiled bitterly when he thought of what happened 20 days ago. Freya certainly wasn't easy to deal with.

She, that was known to be the most beautiful Goddess of Asgard, quickly admitted the death of Odin. She took all the preparations she could instead of wasting time and sealed up Valhalla.

Because of that, the magician king couldn't take over Valhalla. He did crush the fortresses near it to his heart's content but in the first place, only lowest and inferior ranked warriors and steel warriors were at those places. He couldn't inflict a considerate

damage to the real force of Valhalla.

Freya gave up on the several fortresses that were around Valhalla.

She acted that way even though she knew what would happen to them.

It was a cruel and cold decision.

But the magician king got amazed at her. He sent applauses towards her decision as a king.

The king of Gods Odin would have made the same decision as if it was nothing just to achieve victory but it was different for her. He could know as he had observed her as much as he had done so for Odin. That she had come with this decision after a blood boiling anguish.

‘It’s not the best.’

Freya chose to protect the main forces of Valhalla and prevent its fall. Looking at the big picture, you could say that she chose to buy more time.

It was indeed the best option Freya had currently but the option she chose was extremely reliant on external factors.

Now that the king of Gods had died, there were only two things Freya could hope for.

The first one was that Thor defeated the giants that were outside of Valhalla and broke the encirclement.

It was absurd. Thor was certainly strong. Even the magician king wanted to avoid facing against him head on one by one.

But war wasn’t about a duel between warriors.

Thor’s army was currently isolated.

Their path got cut off due to the great earthquake and the great army being led by the frost giant king Harmarti was surrounding

his army.

The frost giant king was someone with strong patience. He read the flow slowly and drew a big picture instead of coming to a quick decision.

He would suppress Thor and his army and evade a duel. The important thing was to isolate his army.

The ones that were anxious were Thor and his army, not Harmarti. The more time passed, the ones that got more disadvantages was Thor.

Harmarti would buy time and the magician king would take over Valhalla.

The giant king was experienced. The one that had pulled on the ropes in the front lines against Asgard in the Great war was none other than him. There was no one more experienced than him in Jotunheim on buying time.

‘Thor’s army won’t be able to rescue you.’

One of Freya’s hope wouldn’t be able to come to light.

And it won’t be different for the remaining conclusion.

‘Reinforcements from another world.’

The other hope Freya had. The last rope she could hang on earnestly.

There were people that got outside of Valhalla evading the eyes of others in the day Valhalla got sealed.

Part of them moved to transmit the notices to Thor’s army but the objective for the others was different. They moved towards Olympus and the Temple.

“We hunted down one more. The reaps aren’t that good, perhaps because we are almost done with the fortresses.”

The magician king turned his head to the direction the voice was

heard at. The beast king Tiachi, that was one of the giant kings, threw a Valkyrie at the feet of the magician king. The Valkyrie that was almost naked was already half dead. There were countless wounds and scars in her body and also traces that she had been toyed with.

The magician king looked at Tiachi.

He was also a small giant like Sigil or Loki.

Transformation techniques were his specialty and his hunting skills were one of the best even among the giant kings.

He had the body similar to those of the warriors of Valhalla as he was a bit taller than 2 meters but his appearances were different from humans. His skin that covered his steel like muscles were red and his fur that had grown like a wolf's was grey. His teeth were like a sharks and his eyes resembled those of an eagle.

He, that was wearing a fur of an evil beast that only lived in Jotunheim, stepped on the Valkyrie that was barely breathing, roughly. He laughed as if it was fun that the Valkyrie twitched and stepped on her a bit more.

“She was heading to the Temple. She's already the thirtieth. Just how many Valkyries did that bitch Freya send to their graves? Especially when she is hiding inside of Valhalla.”

They were messengers to notify of Asgard's urgency.

Thirty Valkyries of Hermod's legion, that were especially fast among other Valkyries, was too big of a number.

Because not even Freya would have been able to imagine them getting caught even before they went to the Temple.

“It was indeed good having dispatched you.”

Tiachi laughed once again at the words of the magician king that were filled with admiration. If it wasn't for him, that was the best hunter of Jotunheim, others would have ended missing some

Valkyries.

Tiachi, that was laughing for a long time, kicked the Valkyrie he was stepping on with his toe to make her turn around and then stepped on her strongly. He closed his eyes and appreciated her strengthless groans as if it was sweet music for his ears. He then raised his head and said.

“Magician king, I believe you remember our promise. The day we take over Valhalla, Freya and Idun shall be mine.”

The Goddesses that were known to be the most beautiful and noble among the several Gods of Asgard.

The magician king faced Tiachi's eyes filled with greed and answered gladly.

“I promise you once again Tiachi. They will be yours.”

A smile spread on Tiachi's face. The teeth of shark that appeared from beneath shone.

“I liked them since before. You can believe me on this one, it's not a lie.”

Tiachi looked at the surroundings of the wall the magician king was leaning on and then tossed the Valkyrie with his feet as if he was handling a ball and grabbed her.

The Valkyrie, that got grabbed by her head, dropped strengthless but she was still breathing.

“He, Valkyries are really nice to play because they are hard. Magician king, next time I will show you the shields I made. This bitch will also become a really nice shield. I'm already looking forward the expression the bastards of Valhalla will make when they see it.”

The shields Tiachi was talking about was literally a shield. He tied up the naked Valkyries to a big and square shield and made his underlings carry them. It was a nasty hobby but it was a really

good method to drop the morale of the enemy and make them lose their consciousness because of rage.

“I thank your hard work.”

Tiachi clicked his tongue at Tiachi’s answer and shrugged his shoulders.

“Changing subjects. There is one thing I wanted to ask. Is it really fine to leave Asgard alone?”

The temple wasn’t the only realm that was adjacent to Asgard. You could say that Olympus had formed an alliance with Asgard since long ago.

But the magician king didn’t raise any defenses at Olympus’ side.

And as he had done it too boldly, Tiachi wondered if he had some sort of plan, but it wasn’t that there were giants that had moved to their side secretly either.

“It won’t be a problem.”

Tiachi’s eyebrows twitched at the short answer but it soon returned to normal. He nodded instead of prying further.

“How regretful. The number of shields would have doubled if I also caught them.”

Asgard would have deployed the same number they dispatched to the Temple to Olympus.

“I will be going now. My 31st hunt could be waiting for me.”

Tiachi laughed and turned around.

The magician king turned to look at Valhalla once again instead of tracking the traces of Tiachi that disappeared like the wind. A new voice was heard from the broken wall.

“He’s a shallow guy.”

It was the giant of night Avalt.

He was the only one that was more of an aide among the Five

Fingers rather than a warrior. Because of that, he also wasn't picky on using dirty methods to attain victory but he also had his limit.

If the giant of strength Harad or the giant of earth Balgad were alive, they would have frowned at his nasty actions.

But the magician king rather smiled.

“Right, that's why it's that much easy to handle him. Compared to Hrumbak or the others.”

There were no notices from Hrumbak, that had gone to invade Niflheim, for a few days already. He had expected him to act as he wished as he had a sense of rivalry against the magician king but the level was slowly passing the limit.

‘I will have to send a messenger in a while.’

It seemed like he was accomplishing his task well as there have been no reinforcements from Niflheim so he would only have to be give him a warning.

“How long until the seal breaks down?”

“It will be over at least in ten days.”

The reason they couldn't destroy the Great barrier even after some days passed was because Valhalla didn't stay still either.

But now, the situation was different. There was no one that obstructed with the destruction of the seal.

At most in ten days.

The magician king had already waited a hundred years. Anyone could wait that much.

“I'm waiting for then. Isn't that right Loki?”

The magician king turned his head and asked, but Loki that was hanging on the chains binded to the walls didn't answer. He just looked at Valhalla with his eyes that had lost light.

&

Valkyrie Kaldea, of Hermod's legion forced a smile.

‘So i'm going to die like this.’

She had been planning to die more happily while dozens of handsome men watched her.

Rather than dozen of men, there was no one in this place. The only thing that was in the outskirts of Asgard, that was close to the temple, was the corpses of the warriors, fragments of the steel warriors, broken walls and evil spirits.

“Kugh.”

Kaldea closed her eyes and let out a groan. Footsteps were approaching from far away. They were the steps of the evil spirits. Normally, she would be able to sweep them up easily but it was impossible to do so right now. Her injuries were too serious. She couldn't even raise her sword with her trembling hand.

‘Is there any survivor?’

Could someone head towards the Temple safely?

Several of her sisters got hunted down by the beast king Tiachi, that was really like a beast. Perhaps, Kaldea would be the last Valkyrie remaining.

The footsteps were now near her. Kaldea opened her eyes and looked at the evil spirits that had gathered. She saw that the evil spirits that approached her while letting out hot steam numbered a dozen.

‘Dog like bastards.’

It was even hard to curse out loud. Kaldea forcefully endured the pain to stand up and then raised her head while sweating cold sweat. She couldn't pull out her sword but managed to say her final words.

“Come at me.”

As she would fight until the end.

If she wasn't able to swing her sword, she would bite them with her teeth. The evil spirits attacked Kaldea and she didn't put her eyes off them. That's why she was able to see it.

An arrow came flying.

It was a fast and strong arrow that was like a stream of light.

About ten more arrows got fired and the exact number of evil spirits collapsed as the number of arrows.

And a strong wind blew. What Kaldea could see after the wind calmed down was the evil spirits that had collapsed like rotten straw.

Kaldea blinked and then put a bright smile instead of forcing one.

"Idun's warrior."

."Kaldea!"

Tae Ho hurriedly ran towards Kaldea, that was about to collapse as soon as she finished speaking. It was the same for Siri, that fired arrows from far away, and Bracky that was next to her.

Tae Ho lied down Kaldea and hurriedly poured potions in the wound of her stomach. He didn't forget to put a piece of golden apple in her mouth either.

"Kaldea, are you fine?"

Kaldea forcefully chewed the piece of golden apple instead of answering Tae Ho. The effects were immediate but drowsiness attacked her because of her overwhelming exhaustion.

Kaldea forcefully opened her eyes that were closing and looked at the ones that gathered next to her. They were all familiar to her.

Tae Ho, Siri and Bracky.

"There aren't dozen of you but i'm still glad that there are handsome men."

Kaldea spoke playfully and closed her eyes. Tae Ho and the others

flinched at that and then let a sigh of relief as they heard her snore.

“Handsome. Kaldea certainly has eyes.”

Siri frowned as Bracky smiled like a fool and scratched his nose.

“Do you have any conscience? You should look at the mirror at times.”

“Ey, why the envy? You also like it.”

Bracky acted as if he was embarrassed and hit Siri’s shoulder slightly. Cuchulainn spoke the moment her face turned more terrible.

‘Why aren’t you saying anything? Huh? You should say that the handsome one isn’t Bracky but you.’

‘There’s no need to argue with something obvious.’

‘Shameless bastard. I can’t even tease you now.’

Tae Ho checked Kaldea’s state with ‘the eyes of the dragon’ and let out a sigh of relief. It seemed like her life wasn’t in danger.

Three days after they left the highest branch.

Tae Ho took his eyes off from Kaldea and looked at another place. Rasgrid and the warriors, that had regrouped in Midgard, were approaching them.

‘Everything has its order.’

Those were Odin’s words. He was currently in Niflheim. The crows that had separated with him were spreading the notices not only in Midgard and Asgard but also in Nidavellir and Svartalfheim and was gathering up forces.

Nidhogg and Hraesvelg hid themselves in Midgard.

They were the trump card Tae Ho and Odin had, just like the magician king used the world wolf.

They would first set a base in Asgard.

Tae Ho looked towards a broken fortress. He could see through his 'eyes of the dragon' that the small fortress was filled with red letters.

Bracky carried Kaldea in his back and Siri was grabbing the magical bow of Tristan, Palenote, with her right silver arm of Nuadha.

“Commander, the order.”

Valkyrie Rasgrid said in a low voice. Twenty warriors that were the cream of the crop even among the ones that remained in Midgard waited for Tae Ho's order.

Their objective was taking back the fortress. Setting up a base.

“Let's go.”

Tae Ho said briefly. Bracky laughed and followed his order.

Asgard, that got taken by the giants.

It was the start of a great counter attack.

< Episode 42 – Great counter attack (1) > End

Episode 42/Chapter 2: Great counter attack

(2)

The night before Tae Ho headed to Asgard, Odin gathered Tae Ho, the warriors and the Valkyries and started to speak to them.

“Asgard is currently taken over by the giants.”

It was a fact that everyone knew but the one that was speaking was the king of Gods Odin. They could feel once again how despairful this situation was.

Odin explain the situation through the hologram he was showing to Tae Ho.

There were many big red circles on top of the mold of Valhalla. They were the giants.

“As you can see, the forces the giant have are two. One is the army of Jotunheim that’s being led by the magician king and the other is the Harmarti’s elite army that’s been confronting Asgard in the front lines.”

Odin had gathered information through the crows in these days. They lacked detail as they didn’t have much time but it was possible to draw the general outline.

“The main force of the giants is in front of Valhalla and Thor’s army.”

The two sides were isolated due to the giants and the evil spirits. In addition, there was quite a distance between them. Valhalla was at the center of Asgard and Thor’s army was at the outskirts of Asgard, that was closer to Jotunheim.

“There are currently two things we can do with our current forces.”

The warriors gathered from Midgard, the reinforcements from Niflheim, the black dragon Nidhogg and the king of birds

Hraesvelg.

They were few in number but were a strong force that no one would be able to overlook.

“First, support Thor.”

They would lend their strength to Thor and defeat Harmarti and his army. They would defeat the magician king after that and take back Valhalla.

It seemed like it would be a good method at first glance but that wasn't the case if you looked at all the conditions.

The first problem was that it took too long.

“There's also the possibility that Valhalla won't be able to endure it.”

Harmarti's army wasn't weak at all. It was certain they wouldn't be able to defeat his army easily even after joining with Thor's army.

Valhalla became the most important place of Asgard after the Great war. Most of the Gods of Asgard were currently gathered in Valhalla.

“The other one is to assist Valhalla.”

They would attack the magician king and his army that is surrounding Valhalla or at least lend them strength to strike back.

This wasn't easy either. They couldn't be certain how much of a force the magician king was holding in standby. It may be impossible to defeat him with their current forces.

“Whatever we choose, it's possible to inflict a significant damage. But we can't decide rashly on it.”

They needed more information.

AND also more time.

“Asgard is wide and the giants and the evil spirits weren't able to

take over all of it. There is an opening.”

What Odin thought of was a guerrilla attack.

They would first attack the giants of the outer areas while hiding Nidhogg and Hraesvelg.

Just like said previously, even if Asgard was smaller than Midgard it was still plentifully big.

Because of that, the giants were also scattered. There were many places the survivors could hide at.

There was a high probability they would think that the guerrilla attack was executed sporadically by the warriors that had survived.

They would cut in from the outside. They would diminish the force of the giants little by little and gather information.

But it also had its flaws.

It was a method that unavoidably took time. They were in a situation that they had to create a change before Valhalla fell so consuming time was by no means a good thing.

“They may also realize Nidhogg’s existence with what they heard from Niflheim.”

Nidhogg flinched at Odin’s remark and put a frightened expression. Adenmaha, that was next to her, embraced her telling her not to worry so she calmed down almost instantly but the ones that were looking at them could only put expressions filled with warmth and worry.

Odin also smiled bitterly. He turned to look at another place and said.

“But we still have Hraesvelg. In addition, Nidhogg’s existence itself can be a means to oppress them.”

Hraesvelg snorted while crossing his arms. Vedrfolnir nodded next to him as if it was really obvious but Nidhogg tilted her head

as she didn't understand well.

'The giants won't know of Nidhogg's nature.....no, true color? Whatever, they won't know what kind of kid she is.'

The black dragon Nidhogg.

A strong existence that could bring the end to the world.

Just like Cuchulainn had said, knowing that Nidhogg had become their enemy could serve as an overwhelming oppression.

"Idun's warrior."

Tae Ho expressed etiquette at Odin's call. Odin approached him and placed his hand on Tae Ho's shoulder.

"I will leave the commanding of the warriors to you. Rescue Valhalla and Asgard as the commander of Idun."

There were many superior ranked warriors that had more experience than Tae Ho among the ones gathered. But Tae Ho was the only commander and everyone knew what merits he had raised.

The warriors of Valhalla didn't get childishly jealous. The great warriors knew how to honestly respect and love.

Everyone consented to Odin's decision. Tae Ho also expressed etiquette and received his order.

"For Asgard and the nine realms."

"For Asgard and the nine realms."

The next morning, Tae Ho headed to Asgard with the elites he had picked.

&

Half a day after Tae Ho arrived on Asgard.

Kaldea, the Valkyrie of Hermod's legion, slowly opened her eyes. The first thing she saw from her blurry sight was a beautiful woman that gave off a wild vibe.

“Are you awake?”

Kaldea blinked once. She woke up a bit more and remembered who was the beauty in front of her. That’s why she cracked a joke instead of answering.

“It would have been better if it was a handsome man waiting for me instead of a beauty.”

“You are fine indeed.”

Siri shook her head unavoidably and said but her face was really bright. It was because she got really happy at the fact that Kaldea had recovered to the point she could crack a joke.

Kaldea looked at Siri’s face and then rolled her eyes. She was at a cozy room that had a wall and a ceiling. It was an unfamiliar scene but she didn’t feel fear as Siri was next to her.

“The handsome man is here.”

A husky voice was heard. Kaldea moved her eyes reflexively and said with an exhausted voice after she looked at Bracky that was smirking.

“It seems that my ears didn’t heal properly.....and my eyes are blurry. Just where is a handsome man here? Ah, did I mishear?”

“Sob sob. They really liked my face in Midgard. Right Siri? Huh?”

Bracky pretended to cry at Kaldea’s counterattack and then asked while pouting his head to Siri. She answered while pulling back.

“I don’t want to answer right now.”

Kaldea’s eyes shone at the word ‘right now’. She hurriedly opened her mouth and butted in.

“It’s a joke, a joke. I’m greatly satisfied with Bracky. He’s manly, reliable, has muscles. Right, Siri? Huh? People have their own tastes.”

“Why are you being like that to me?”

Kaldea giggled as Siri looked at her with resentful eyes. She then grabbed her stomach as if her injury hurt.

“It hurts. A lot.”

“Don’t over do it as you have just woken up.”

It was another voice. They couldn’t see the owner of the voice yet because the big Bracky was covering her but the voice was enough for Kaldea.

“It’s our ice princess. Can you hug me once? I barely survived. I want to hug someone. Hug me.”

Rasgrid let out a sigh but fulfilled Kaldea’s request. It was because she would be able to do anything as Kaldea barely managed to survive, just like she had said.

The hug wasn’t a warm one as Rasgrid was wearing her armor, compared to the light clothes Kaldea. But Rasgrid didn’t miss that Kaldea trembled from her embrace. It seemed like she was hiding several emotions while pretending to be strong.

“Kaldea.”

Kaldea smirked at Rasgrid’s low call. She pushed her away as if she was really fine and then spoke while leaning back on the bed.

“A real handsome man has come.”

“Really?”

Tae Ho approached the bed when Bracky mumbled with a low voice. Kaldea asked with a still bright expression.

“Where are we?”

“It’s a..... private house that was nearby.”

They had taken back the small fortress that was taken over by the evil spirits but the group had left it as it was in poor conditions and wasn’t proper to defend or hide themselves.

The reason Tae Ho paused when he spoke was because he was doubtful if the expression ‘private house’ was correct.

It was because this house was the property of a citizen of Asgard—a God.

‘Erin was also like this. Precisely speaking, the town where the Tuatha De Danann lived was like this.’

The Tuatha De Danann was a clan composed entirely by Gods.

Cuchulainn wasn’t the only one that didn’t see where Tae Ho got bewildered at. There was a saying that said that the thread followed where needle was at, and Adenmaha that stood next to Tae Ho pinched his side with her elbow and said.

“Why are you being that awkward? It seems like you keep forgetting this but I’m also a God.”

She was a Goddess of the Tuatha De Danann and also a Valkyrie.

‘Rasgrid and Kaldea are also Gods. Goddesses. Heda too. Why are you acting like this? Did you forget where this is?’

The land of Gods Asgard. It was obvious that it was filled with Gods.

In the other hand, Kaldea that enjoyed looking at the awkward Tae Ho, took a deep breath and nodded.

“You were alive anyways. Right, I thought that you wouldn’t die that easily. I’m glad. Heda was right.”

There was a rumor that Tae Ho had died with Odin. Idun and Heda denied but all of Valhalla, including Kaldea, had accepted the rumors to be true.

Tae Ho bit his lips the moment Kaldea mentioned Heda. He wanted to ask several things but there were other things to prioritize right now.

Rasgrid turned to look at Tae Ho for a moment and then said while looking at Kaldea once again.

“Kaldea, I will tell you the situation. Hear it while you recover.”

A healing light appeared on Rasgrid’s hands. Kaldea received Rasgrid’s hands but she shook her head about the situation.

“No, it’s fine. There’s the possibility I may leak the information when I get caught.”

“Kaldea-nim?”

To say when she got caught.

Kaldea just smiled bitterly at Siri’s question and then asked to Rasgrid and Tae Ho.

“Just tell me one thing. Is Odin fine?”

“He is.”

Kaldea got satisfied at Tae Ho’s answer. She let out a sigh as she didn’t have any regrets and put a relaxed expression.

“Good. It’s enough with that. I will be able to go more relieved.”

It was a thin voice but you could feel her resolution in it. Rasgrid grabbed Kaldea’s hand and asked.

“Kaldea, where do you say you are going? Is it related to the letter you had?”

“Yes, that’s right. I have to go to the Temple and request for reinforcements. Just like we did in the Great war.”

The current situation was the same than a hundred years ago. The Valkyries of Hermod’s legion shouldered the danger and headed to Olympus and the Temple to notify of Asgard’s urgency.

“The path going to the temple is filled with giants and evil spirits.”

“I know. But I still have to go as it’s something this important, right?”

Already close to thirty of her sisters had been hunted down. Perhaps, Kaldea may be the last Valkyrie holding a letter.

The current situation is despairful even if Odin really is alive. We absolutely need the help of the Temple.

“We don’t have time. I will leave now.”

“It’s impossible alone.”

Rasgrid forcefully grabbed Kaldea trying to get up her bed. Tae Ho exchanged glances with Siri and spoke to Kaldea.

“We will go with you. We will create an opening.”

In the first place, Tae Ho’s group was planning to execute a guerrilla tactic in Asgard. Fighting to transmit a letter to the Temple was enough of a reason.

But Kaldea shook her head.

“The one guarding the path is one of the giant kings, the Beast king Tiachi. He also has a lot of his underlings. I know that you defeated the Tyrant Bress but it’s imp.....”

She stopped there. Kaldea, that was about to say that it was better if she shouldered all the danger alone rather than putting everyone in danger, stopped speaking unconsciously.

It wasn’t because Tae Ho told her about Nidhogg and Hraesvelg. The reason she got surprised was just because of Tae Ho.

“Ah, just what happened while I didn’t see you?”

About two months since the battle in Kalliv Ahim.

Kaldea felt the same bewilderment Siri and Bracky felt and nodded while smiling bitterly.

Adenmaha snorted as if she was the one that had heard the compliment and acted to be strong.

Kaldea was still looking at Tae Ho. He spoke briefly after releasing part of his strength.

“Many things have happened.”

Quite a lot actually.

Tae Ho grabbed Kaldea's hands. He asked towards her whose blue eyes were shining with hope, surprise and perplexion at the same time.

“Tell me about the Beast king Tiachi.”

Kaldea didn't decline anymore. She told him everything she knew about.

< Episode 42 – Great counter attack (2) > End

Episode 42/Chapter 3: Great counter attack (3)

Valkyrie Hrist was at the point of dying.

She, that belonged to the legion of Hermod, was accomplishing a task given by Freya.

Notify of the urgency to Olympus and the Temple.

72 Valkyries received a letter that had the same contents. They, that got out of Valhalla when it got sealed, scattered to two directions while praying for each others safety.

The direction Hrist headed to was the path that connected to the Temple.

There were small worlds in Asgard just like Midgard and Svartalvheim.

Asgard, Midgard and Niflheim were connected directly to the manifested part of the world tree and the remaining smaller worlds were connected by an invisible path through the system of Yggdrasil.

The Temple and Olympus were realms that were comparable to Asgard.

The realms in the motto of Valhalla 'For Asgard and the nine realms' referred to the Temple, Olympus, Erin and such worlds.

You had to first pass through a special location to go outside of Asgard. If you thought of each world as being a continent or an island, the place in between was a sea and the special location was a port.

Hrist breathed roughly. She had no strength while being carried by the Beast king Tiachi. Her limbs fluttered strengthlessly following Tiachi's steps.

Her sisters that headed to Olympus couldn't know the situation but the ones that were heading to the Temple knew how terrible the situation was.

Could Kaldea have escaped?

The Valkyrie that had been with her until the end among the 31 Valkyries that were headed to the Temple.

The Valkyries got helplessly hunted down by Tiachi and his underlings. They cruelly hunted them down one by one from the fortresses that got destroyed due to the great earthquake as if hunting down foxes.

When all of her many sisters got caught and only Hrist and Kaldea were left, Hrist made a decision. She would become bait so that Kaldea could escape.

Hrist couldn't think anymore. She felt absent minded. It was because all the things the Beast king did to her after she got caught had worn her away physically and mentally.

"We are almost there."

Tiachi snickered and said. Hrist, that was being carried in his shoulder naked, couldn't see her surroundings properly. But she could know where she was just by smelling the nasty smell piercing her nose and the wicked laughs.

It was the headquarters Tiachi had set up in the path leading to the Temple.

Originally, he had to come here as soon as he caught Hrist but Tiachi took a long detour. He played with Hrist for a few hours and then went to the base that was located near Valhalla to boast about his hunt to the magician king and he then roamed its surroundings to hunt the remaining warriors.

"Valkyries are always good bait."

The warriors of Valhalla were way too simple. It was because

they went crazy whenever they heard a scream from a Valkyrie.

Tiachi laughed for a long while and threw Hrist to the ground. The pain that covered her body when she hit the ground made Tiachi enjoy the scene.

“You look just like a bug when you twitch.”

Tiachi kicked Hrist. If she was a normal human, she would have already died but ironically, she couldn't die as she was a Valkyrie. She just squeezed out a groan and suffered.

The underlings of Tiachi, the small giants and evil spirits, gathered next to her. There were some that gulped saliva as if looking at food and there were others that were panting because their bodies heated up.

“Play with her moderately and leave.”

Tiachi snickered and said and then, one of the underlings hurriedly raised Hrist as if he was waiting for it. He forcefully grabbed on Hrist's jaw and made her look at one place.

Hrist became dumbfounded. She couldn't think anything as if her head had stopped.

There were naked Valkyries hanging on a board as if they were flags. There were clear traces that they got toyed with and one of them was still being toyed by the evil spirits.

It was a cruel and terrible scene. An exclamation that was like a scream came out from her mouth.

“Ahh, ahhhh!”

It was a cry filled with despair. The voice that was mixed with grief and still had some resolution in it transmitted a new pleasant feeling to Tiachi.

Tiachi moved his chin slightly and then his underlings laughed and threw Hrist to the ground. They started to toy with Hrist to their heart contents while the Valkyries that were hanging on

looked that.

A sob was heard. Even the Valkyries that had steel like resolution had a limit. Tiachi could feel his breath get rough just by hearing the weak cry.

The joy of dirtying a white snow field.

The pleasure of breaking a clean glass.

It was this fun just to toy with the Valkyries so how fun will it be with the Goddesses? What kind of pleasure will he get when he broke Freya and Idun?

Blood gathered to his lower body just by imagining that. Tiachi then looked at the Valkyries that were hanging.

“My king.”

One giant appeared at that moment and called out to Tiachi. It was Tiachi's underling, Itaka that was about 3 meters tall.

Tiachi frowned as the sexual desire that had surged up had disappeared but he didn't get angry. Itaka was a precious underling to him. In addition, it would be something important if he came to speak to him knowing how he would be feeling right now.

And it was as he expected.

“We have discovered traces of a Valkyrie. It seems like it's the one we missed that time.”

The one that was together with Hrist.

Tiachi's eyes shone with greed. Itaka started to explain a bit faster.

“It seems like there's a connection with the evil spirits that disappeared from the small destroyed fortress. Currently, the beaters are driving her to a corner.”

Itaka explained briefly the things he guessed had happened in the small fortress. Tiachi didn't mind that weak evil spirits died but he

felt joy in Itaka's explanation. And the reason for it was simple.

"She's still lively. It would be worth playing with her."

Looking that she slashed away dozens of evil spirits alone meant that she still had energy. The more energetical and outstanding a Valkyrie was, the more fun he got when he broke her down.

Itaka explained about the place and the situation that they were driving the Valkyrie at. IT seems like the Valkyrie didn't choose to escape but chose to pierce a path to go to the Temple.

"She's also quite faithful."

Tiachi snickered.

The path going to the Temple wasn't completely blocked. Tiachi had left one open on purpose.

The strand like path that was connected to the Temple.

It was really obvious that it was a trap but you had to pass through it to reach the Temple.

Teachi made a decision. There was no reason to delay. He shrugged his shoulders once and then approached the evil spirits that were playing with Hrist. He slapped her cheek as was closing her eyes while taking in all of the humiliation to make her open her eyes.

"I discovered the place the sister you have rescued is at. I will bring her now."

He whispered with a low voice and waited. For Hrist's expression to contort. For her to show him eyes that was filled with grief and sorrow.

And it turned out as he wanted. Tears flowed down from Hrist's eyes.

"It will be a beautiful reencounter."

Tiachi slapped her one more time strongly. He snickered at Hrist

that had blood flowing from her mouth and stood up.

“Let’s go.”

Tiachi took the lead after he spoke freshly. He heard the footsteps of Itaka and the hunters from his back and the groans of the Valkyrie and looked at a distant place.

He went out to hunt once again.

&

Valkyrie Kaldea was fleeing right now. Her unique battle uniform of Valkyries was torn and broken, and there was a big blood stain in her stomach.

The small giants chased after Kaldea, that was fleeing desperately. The beaters could catch up to her whenever they wanted but they maintained some distance on purpose. Their role was to harass their prey, not to catch it.

Kaldea panted while sweating like rain. Anyone could clearly see that she was at her limit.

It was too pitiful to see her escape while limping.

The beaters snickered and chased her back and there was someone looking at that from afar.

‘It looks real. It was worth having closed my eyes at your atrocities.’

Cuchulainn laughed as if it was absurd.

The Kaldea that was fleeing right now was a fake made with Tae Ho’s saga. But you couldn’t differentiate her from being real or not just by looking at her looks. In addition, fleeing as if she was greatly injured didn’t seem like an act but the real deal.

The place the fake Kaldea was running at was a forest that was close to the Temple.

Tae Ho hid his body in the shadows and waited for the hunt to

take the bait. However, beings such as the beaters weren't the hunt Tae Ho was waiting for.

The Beast king Tiachi.

One of the giant kings that came from Jotunheim.

The situation wouldn't end by simply removing him. There were many things to take into account.

And among them, one of the most important thing was to send Kaldea safely to the Temple. That's why they also had to remove Tiachi's forces that were blocking the path.

And one more thing in here. Something they must do.

They had to rescue the Valkyries. Leaving them at their current state wasn't something a warrior of Valhalla would ignore.

The strategy was simple.

They would split Tiachi from his force and then destroy them one by one.

'The fish is coming.'

Cuchulainn said and Tae Ho turned around to look with his 'eyes of the dragon'.

[Giant king]

[Beast king Tiachi]

Red words.

Tae Ho looked at a more distant place. He looked at the direction Tiachi came running from.

&

Tiachi's forces that were blocking the path to the Temple wasn't small at all.

There were at least a hundred little giants and the evil spirits easily numbered ten thousand.

Even if the warriors Tae Ho was leading were the elites of the elites, it was impossible to defeat that number in an instant. In addition, they also had to rescue more than thirty Valkyries. They certainly needed additional reinforcements.

‘We are going to get caught anyways, so let’s go out boldly.’

Adenmaha, that hid herself on a cliff looking down at the base of Tiachi, remembered Tae Ho’s words and took a deep breath. She rolled her fingers and prepared to dispel the mystical magic she had prepared with Merlin.

They would strike the base head on to create chaos and the detached force Rasgrid lead would rescue the Valkyries.

Tae Ho used a new summoning rock Merlin created for this strategy. There were three of these summoning rocks and one registered being.

A signal came from afar. Adenmaha, that was glaring at the evil spirits that were gathered at the entrance of the base, rolled her fingers and completely removed the mystical magic. She made the existence that was hiding in the sky appear completely.

There was no loud sound or roar.

But the evil spirits all looked at the sky almost at the same time. The shadow that covered them made them do that. The huge existence that couldn’t be ignored forced them to do that.

The evil spirits looked at the sky with absent minded eyes. They got suppressed by the really huge existence and couldn’t even scream.

A black dragon that reached a hundred meters.

That dragon fluttered its wings. A huge wind blew in the ground and poison was spread widely along the wind. The evil spirits that breathed in the poison unconsciously screamed and collapsed.

And it finally descended. The black and huge dragon landed

down on the ground roughly. The countless evil spirits that were below it got crushed just by it landing in the ground.

There was still no roar but complete silence covered the base. The ones that barely squeezed out their voice were the giants.

Scream, surprise, loud voices and displeasure.

All kind of voices were heard in the base and Hraesvelg, that was looking at all of that while standing on the head of the black dragon, clicked his tongue.

“How unsightly.”

They have left their real bodies in Midgard. It was to hide their existence that would become the trump card against the magician king.

Actually, not even their essences were going to come but a reason appeared that they had to stand on the battlefield.

“What do we have to do now?”

Nidhogg asked Hraesvelg in the heart room. It was really ironical that the voice of a cute woman was heard from the dragon that emanated an overwhelming pressure but Hraesvelg didn't lose his composure.

He let out a roar towards the giants and evil spirits that were in the base before he gave the next order to Nidhogg.

He, that had the clearest eye even in the highest branch, knew what the Valkyries that were deep in the base suffering just as if they were right in front of his eyes.

“Lowly beings! I will kill you!”

A loud yell shook the sky and the ground and the thousands of evil spirits trembled at that. Hraesvelg felt proud at that and tried to say something. But Nidhogg's bewildered voice came out a bit quicker.

“Hraesvelg! Tae Ho master said that you can't say your name.....

Ah!”

Nidhogg hurriedly covered her mouth but it was too late. It was because the black dragon covering its mouth was really a strange scene and couldn't cover Nidhogg's words.

Hraesvelg.

Most of them didn't know him and there were few that had heard it as Nidhogg's voice was low. But some of them heard it clearly. Their terrified expressions was proof of that.

Hraesvelg, that checked the expressions of the giants with his clear eyes, closed his eyes. He wanted to go somewhere and lament himself but he suppressed his feelings and then spoke to Nidhogg that didn't know what to do while she shrunk her shoulders.

“It doesn't matter. We just have to get rid of everyone in this place.”

If they eliminated everyone that had heard it, the secret would be protected.

“Oh, that's the case?”

“Yes, it is.”

Hraesvelg answered to Nidhogg's shy question and then looked down at the battlefield with his exalted eyes. He glared at them, that were preparing to flee or fight, and ordered Nidhogg.

“Nidhogg! Roll!”

Because that was much better than trying to fight sloppily.

“Yes! I will!”

Nidhogg answered freshly and started to roll without hesitation.

The movements of a black dragon that reached a hundred meters and covered its body with poison.

It was enough with that.

Hell spread out on the battlefield.

< Episode 42 – Great counter attack (3) > End

Episode 42/Chapter 4: Great counter attack (4)

The giants and evil spirits couldn't react easily.

The existence of the black dragon rolling on the battlefield was a nightmare itself.

The ground shook as if an earthquake was hitting. The huge and on top of that fast dragon rolling on the ground resembled a hail. It wasn't possible to dodge it even though you knew it was coming.

It was the same for the poison covering the dragon. The poison that got spread left traces where the dragon passed by. The evil spirits that barely managed to dodge the attack of the rolling dragon vomited blood in the poison and collapsed.

The enraged evil spirits and giants threw several throwing weapons but it was pointless. The black dragon was a hundred meters big and the thickness of its scales was also unimaginable. In addition, a defensive effect was added because of its rolling motion so mere throwing weapons couldn't leave even a scratch.

Choosing to get on top of it also wasn't an option. How were you supposed to get on it when it rolled without stop?

The evil spirits fell completely in a panicked state compared to the giants, that were thinking up of ways to fight back. The ones that got swept by the dragon fear unintentionally by Nidhogg just fled and kept fleeing.

Adenmaha, that saw all of that from a distance, spread her mouth with a dumbfounded face.

“She's really rolling.”

Adenmaha thought of when she was rolling in the Winter tree forest but then shook her head. The scale was different from that time.

‘She has already rolled before.’

It didn’t seem like she was doing it for the first time looking at how she rolled. It seemed like she had quite the experience.

Well, didn’t Tae Ho also tell Adenmaha to roll without hesitation? In one side, it was more effective than fighting with traditional methods.

Poison spread in the battlefield naturally. The evil spirits couldn’t escape properly because of the ground shaking due to the roll and no openings could be seen on the dragon.

The owner of Adenmaha indeed.

The one sided roll was the best fighting method the current Nidhogg could come up with currently.

But her distorted admiration due to being in love also lasted for a moment. She thought of a fact suddenly.

‘But why did Hraesvelg come with her if she was going to do that?’

If she was going to roll anyways, was Hraesvelg’s command really necessary?

Adenmaha’s doubt was logical but Hraesvelg would have felt depressed.

Hraesvelg, that was located on the head of the rolling dragon, was moving busily. There was no need to move his feet as he was standing on air but the movement of the dragon was faster than he had imagined so he couldn’t stay still for a moment.

In addition, Hraesvelg was already performing greatly in an invisible way. It was because he was telling the direction Nidhogg should roll to as there was a high probability she didn’t know where to roll and did something else.

Everytime Hraesvelg swung his arm, the sleeves of his arms fluttered at the wind. The white feathers that got fired at the same

time pierced the forehead of the important ones among the giants.

The ones holding flags, the commanders, the ones fighting valiantly and the especially strong guys.

But of course, it was hard to defeat a giant with only one feather but Hraesvelg didn't mind too much. He just had to hit them with several feathers and if that didn't work either he just had to obstruct their movement.

'The protagonist of this battle is Nidhogg.'

Hraesvelg was a hidden supporter. If Nidhogg was the main dish served in a luxurious dish, Hraesvelg was the side dishes.

'Fight Nidhogg. My old ene.....fight anyways.'

He erased the words he couldn't finish and cheered her. Nidhogg's voice was heard right then.

"H, Hraesvelg. I'm diz....dizzy."

Compared to when Tae Ho controlled her, she was sharing all her senses with the black dragon all by herself.

The heart room itself didn't spin as it was floating in a deep place of the dragon's body but there was no way to dodge the dizziness as she was sharing the spinning motion mentally.

Hraesvelg didn't ponder at Nidhogg's plead. He spoke with a blunt voice.

"Endure it and roll."

As they couldn't stop now.

"Bleeeergh."

Nidhogg let out a suffering voice but he ignored it and this decision of Hraesvelg rather brought a good effect.

The black dragon started to vomit at the same time as Nidhogg. A dense liquid that couldn't be compared to the poison until now covered the battlefield.

&

“Th, they are doing well.”

Rasgrid saw the black dragon shaking the battlefield from afar and said with a forced calmed voice. Reginleif, that was next to her, pretended to laugh magnanimously.

“ANyways, let’s go. We have to hurry.”

The one leading the rescuing troop was Rasgrid. Reginleif and Gandur were also included in that group and a dozen intermediate warriors followed her back.

As the warriors of Ullr’s legion and Gandur covered themselves with a cloak to disguise themselves and started to cross the battlefield with the stealth blessing, the evil spirits and giants couldn’t even notice them.

In the first place, they were entirely focused on the dragon.

Rasgrid didnt’t get excited as expected of her nickname as the ice queen. She rather became calmer the deeper she went.

She thought while running. She only knew that the Valkyries were trapped deep in the battlefield, she didn’t know in what state they were at.

The place Tiachi’s army was residing at was originally a fortress of Valhalla. Could they be using the destroyed fortress as a prison? Or did they make a sort of net and gathered all the Valkyries?

There were thirty Valkyries that got caught based on Kaldea’s words. Because of that Rasgrid determined herself.

Perhaps, half of them would be already dead. There was the possibility they got executed or got hung up.

Rasgrid imagined that. Just imagining it made her suffer but she still thought of it to not get taken aback when she faced it for real.

And when they reached the place the Valkyries were imprisoned, Rasgrid ended up freezing at the scene she never imagined.

“Rasgrid.”

Gandur, that was always energetic and playful, said in a low voice. She, that was a shieldmaiden compared to Rasgrid and Reginleif, had expected the scene she was looking at to some extent. But of course, it was crueler to what she had imagined but still, she was able to maintain her reason because of that.

“Our objective isn’t to kill them or sweep them all up. Our objective is to rescue our sisters.”

Nidhogg was performing greatly but there were still a lot of evil spirits and giants. If they wanted to safely get away with the thirty Valkyries, they had to turn their eyes away at the rage for a moment and focus on escaping.

Rasgrid turned to look at Gandur. Her blue eyes that were usually calm were shaking with rage and grief. Gandur faced her eyes fixedly and said.

“He will take revenge for us. You believe in him, right? So we should do what we have to do.”

The Beast king Tiachi, that was probably the one that had created this scene.

The one that would face him. The one that would execute the revenge of the Valkyries.

Rasgrid closed her eyes. When she took a breath and opened her eyes again, her eyes had regained its usual light.

Gandur smirked. She lightly hit Rasgrid’s chest and then hit her own chest.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

Reginleif and the warriors also regained their composure. Gandur glared at the evil spirits and little giants that were near the Valkyries that were hung up.

“For Idun’s warrior.”

Rasgrid mumbled. She charged forward after taking a breath and Gandur and the warriors followed her back.

&

The Beast king Tiachi stopped at some point. The loud sound that was heard behind him from far away made him stop.

There was a fuss in the direction of the base. He couldn’t see clearly because of the trees in the forest but it wasn’t something normal looking at the earth that was shaking all the way where he was.

Something happened in the base.

Tiachi first turned to look at Itaka but he was also as bewildered as he was. The little giants that were by his side simply waited for his orders instead of running about in confusion.

Tiachi saw the clear bloodstains the Valkyrie left behind but she was now looking at him with eyes that were different from before while staggering.

Trap. Bait.

Tiachi smiled at the words that popped in his head. It was a smile mixed with cruelty and indignation.

“Itaka, I’m returning to the base. You go catch that bitch.”

Itaka frowned at the short order but he assented. He had to follow the orders as it came from his king. In addition, it wasn’t that the king was going to catch her himself but that he was going to return to the base so it wasn’t much of a problem.

“I will do so.”

Itaka made an eye gesture to some of the underlings that were next to him.

He and those underlings stepped up and Tiachi turned around

with the remaining ones.

But right at that moment, an arrow of light pierced the heads and shoulders of the giants.

Three giants fell down. Itaka got surprised and turned around and Tiachi, that grabbed the arrow flying straight towards his head, turned to look at the direction the arrow came flying from.

“Hi.”

The stealth blessing Siri was using broke. The warriors of Valhalla that appeared suddenly from the bushes attacked Itaka and the little giants.

Itaka put a defensive stance reflexively. Bracky, that appeared the first, concentrated only in one thing instead of attacking over his guard.

Creating more distance between him and Tiachi. Make him get farther from the battlefield.

Bracky tore a special scroll of Merlin and the earth started to twitch. Walls started to surge up and then pushed the ones that were at the side of Tiachi.

Tiachi opened his eyes widely and Siri headed to the other little giants instead of aiming for him. It was the same for the five warriors of Valhalla that charged along Siri and Bracky. They all tore one scroll each and generated changes in the ground.

Tiachi knew what the warriors were aiming for and that's why he laughed in an absurd way. He just waited for his opponent instead of charging towards the warriors of Valhalla.

“You are saying that you want to face me alone?”

Tiachi looked at the one that finally appeared and laughed.

Tiachi was the Beast king. One of the giant kings of Jotunheim.

“Arrogant bastard.”

Tiachi glared at his opponent and his opponent also did the same. He faced Tiachi's anger head on.

Tae Ho heard Hrist's story from Kaldea. What she saw was merely a part of what Hrist had suffered but it was enough with that.

Odin had said.

That the ones hoping for destruction didn't wish a natural decay. They actively wished the destruction of the world.

And they lived for that. They were existences that solely lived for that purpose.

The essence of the ones wanting to maintain and the ones wanting to destroy the world was different because of that way of thinking. Because of that, it was impossible to perfectly understand one side.

But Tae Ho could somewhat feel it the moment he faced Tiachi. He could know even without using the 'eyes of the dragon'.

Tiachi was one that hoped for the destruction of the world.

He enjoyed the scene when hope got destroyed and it became despair. Stepping and dirtying a noble way of thinking gave him pleasure.

He was a wielder of a black desire that got obsessed on the process rather than the results.

Tae Ho thought of the Tyrant Bress. The fomoires that were heated up about conquering and dominating. They were the same but different at the same time. Tiachi's desire was much darker and dirtier than Bress's.

[Saga: Idun's warrior]

The golden power of a God surged up from Tae Ho's body and a conspicuous color showed in Tiachi's eyes. It was a reaction he showed when he discovered a prey.

Tae Ho didn't stop there. He gripped Caliburn and activated more sagas.

[Saga: The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him]

[Saga: His pocket is connected to a treasure vault]

Fake Valkyries appeared..

The fake Heda and the fake Adenmaha stood next to Tae Ho and followed by them the fake Rasgrid, Reginleif, Gandur, Ingrid and even Scathach appeared.

Tiachi put a smile at the sudden appearance of the Valkyries. He even snickered because the number of preys had increased.

The Valkyries grabbed the weapons that appeared in the air and stepped up.

[Saga: The legendary pro gamer]

The fake Heda, that had the highest completion rate, became the core. The other fake Valkyries got synchronized to Heda as the core and then, the auras they were emanating started to change one by one.

Tiachi flinched at that moment but it wasn't the end yet.

[Saga: King of Camelot]

The glory of Camelot got fired from the blades of Caliburn.

He added a new strength to the weapons of the knights of the round table the Valkyries were holding.

Tae Ho took a step and the Valkyries did the same.

The smile disappeared from Tiachi's face. Tae Ho saw him take a battle stance and said in a low voice.

'There's one thing I learned for sure in the fight against Hraesvelg-nim.'

'What is it?'

‘There’s no business with a deficient ship.’

‘That’s so true.’

Cuchulainn agreed. AT that moment, the fake Heda howled and charged. The other Valkyries followed her back.

7 Valkyries and Idun’s warrior.

Tae Ho raised his sword.

< Episode 42 – Great counter attack (4) > End

Episode 42/Chapter 5: Great counter attack (5)

‘Facing one people with many isn’t as easy as you think.’

Those were Ragnar’s words. And Cuchulainn and Tae Ho agreed to that.

When assuming that two people that have the same battle power attack one enemy from both sides, what will happen with the total battle power of those two people?

It was easy to think that it will become $1 + 1$ but reality wasn’t like that.

If the opponent wasn’t much bigger than you, you didn’t get much chances that several people could target the opponent at once. In addition, there were also cases that they obstructed each other due to their own attacks.

The most important thing in an attack from several parties, was their coordination. Based on how well they worked together, the addition of their battle power could become 2 or could become lower than 1.

Eight targets attacking one enemy was too excessive and because of that the ones that could attack at the same time were merely four.

And that was only when the opponent was completely open. If one direction was restricted, then the number of people reduced even more.

Tiachi made a quick decision the moment the seven Valkyries charged forward. They were inside a forest but there weren’t that many trees near them. They were in a situation that they could surround him easily.

Tiachi kicked the ground with strength and surged up. Jumping

to the air enabled to you dodge the immediate attacks but restricted your movements so it was easy to become an open target.

But Tiachi also had his own thoughts. The moment he spread his arms, his two arms became huge wings of an eagle.

That was the reason why Tiachi got called as the Beast king.

He, that was the best hunter among the giants, was also the best transformer. He could transform to almost every beast and could also transform a part of his body like he was doing right now.

Tiachi fluttered his wings after transforming his arms. He wasn't planning to flee even a little. What he was thinking was attacking as a hunter bird catching its prey. He was planning to break the Valkyries that were looking at the sky dumbfoundedly.

But he realized that something was wrong the moment he finished his first stroke of his wing.

The Valkyries weren't looking at the sky with dumbfounded expressions. When he looked down at the ground, several Valkyries were already surging up to the sky.

Four Valkyries became the foothold for Tae Ho and the remaining three Valkyries. They didn't exchange glances and divided their roles in an instant.

The fake Heda got on the hands the fake Gandur gathered and the Gandur sent Heda flying up to the sky with all her strength. It was the same for the other Valkyries.

Tiachi hurriedly twisted his body. The sword of Heda pierced the space Tiachi had been and the fake Scathach surged from the shoulders of the fake Adenmaha and changed her direction once again. She stabbed towards Tiachi with her spear so he could twist his body once again desperately.

Tiachi rolled his eyes. He transformed his two arms into the arms of a rhinoceros, that had thick and rough leather, without even

having time to curse out. Tae Ho, that had been waiting for the perfect moment, slashed the arms Tiachi had gathered.

His sword cut him really deeply. His skin got ripped and blood spluttered. Tiachi gritted his teeth and crashed down. Four of the fake Valkyries were already formed in a circle in the point that was estimated Tiachi would fall.

It was an unbelievably linked play. How did they work so well together without even glancing at each other!

Tiachi transformed into a big armadillo and made his body round. He then started to spin in that state and maximized his attack.

He wouldn't simply crash down but rather strike back.

It was a desperate measure but quite excellent. The strong magical power Tiachi had as a magician king made his speed and spinning power much stronger. The same power of a meteor strike would be generated from his attack.

Tae Ho embraced Heda from her waist and kicked the air. Scathach and Adenmaha changed their bodies in the air to control their descending point and the four Valkyries that were in the ground dodged from the estimated fallign point of Tiachi.

Bang!

Tiachi hit the ground. The shockwave swept the surroundings and the ground shook and dust surged up.

It was a plentily strong attack although he failed in damaging the Valkyries but Tiachi still couldn't understand. The movements of the Valkyries were just too well coordinated this time too.

As soon as he unfolded his body and transformed back into a giant king, the Valkyries started to pour out sharp attacks.

‘This crazy!’

Curses came out by its own. The attack of the Valkyries was as

smooth as flowing water. They didn't just stop at stabbing from the sides but they filled the openings of each other. It seemed like they were originally one body.

But he was still the giant king. Tiachi released a great amount of magic power in an instant and made a big move. It was to crush the Valkyries with his attack and cut the flow of the attacks.

And his intention was quite right. The huge magic power he released by swinging his fist completely crushed the fake Reginleif that was coming from the front. She disappeared without even being able to scream.

But the remaining three didn't get swept at the aftershock. The moment the fake Reginleif got hit at the magical attack, Rasgrid and Gandur executed low attacks almost by lying on the ground. Their swords aiming for Tiachi's ankle were just like snakes.

Tiachi hurriedly kicked Gandur but he wasn't able to do anything to Rasgrid's attack. He concentrated magic power in his leg hurriedly but he lacked time. In addition, there was something else that was terrible.

The attacks of the Valkyries were too strong.

The weapons that got strengthened by the Glory of Camelot displayed the same power as when it was wielded by the knights of the round table. The sword of the knight of truth Agravain which Rasgrid swung tore Tiachi's ankle along his magic power.

Tiachi's posture broke but he was still a renowned giant king. He transformed into a big animal in that state and tried to crush Rasgrid and Gandur together.

But it only ended in an attempt this time.

Ingrid grabbed Gandur by her waist and kicked the ground. Rasgrid, that had succeeded in her attack, also kicked the ground and got out of Tiachi's range.

And Scathach filled that empty space when she descended from

the sky. The other Valkyries overwhelmed Tiachi in an instant with their spearmanship.

‘Hey! Why is her completion rate so high!’

Cuchulainn got angry. It was because the movements of the fake Scathach were too good.

Just when did he increase the completion rate by that much?

Tae Ho answered calmly at Cuchulainn’s rage. She made Heda join in the attack with Scathach and talked back quickly.

‘I just synchronized them?!’

The seven fake Valkyries were all synchronized to the fake Heda as the core. Because of that, they could greatly increase their completion rate although not as much as Heda.

The effects of the synchronization didn’t end there.

The reason the seven of them could move as if they were one was also because of that. They could share their thoughts without needing to glance so it was an obvious they could do that much.

In addition, Tae Ho’s controlling was added to this. But there was no need to control them from start to end like he did with Nidhogg.

The Valkyries moved autonomously and Tae Ho just gave a strategic order in the decisive time.

And this kind of battle was too familiar for Tae Ho.

‘I feel like doing a boss raid.’

The team play in Dark Age.

The fake Valkyries that had dodged the attack also joined Scathach and Heda in the attack. Tiachi’s limbs became more confusing and because of that more attacks started to land in him.

‘Items boosting is really the best.’

The second fact.

The individual battle power of each Valkyrie was merely at the intermediate rank, excluding Heda and Scathach. But their attack power was greatly surpassing that of normal intermediate ranked warriors.

Tiachi couldn't overlook any attack at all. He excelled in strength and speed but he was a level lower in durability due to his small body.

Babang!

Loud explosions were heard in consecution. Those were the sounds made when Rasgrid and Gandur disappeared.

Tiachi poured out attacks while having become a bloody mess. He received Scathach's attacks with his body and destroyed Ingrid by hitting her in her head.

A smile stained with accomplishment and pain was drawn in Tiachi's face. He looked at Tae Ho instead of looking at Scathach and Heda.

Tae Ho, that was looking at the Valkyries attacking Tiachi from a side, answered Tiachi's nasty smile with the same smile.

Scathach twisted her spear. Tiachi let out a groan at that and swung his arm after transforming it into snakes. He bit off her neck to make blood flow out and then transformed into several beasts to heal his wounds.

Heda didn't charge towards Tiachi while Scathach disappeared. She rather fell back and created some distance.

It wasn't because Tae Ho treasured the fake Heda. The reason they did that was to grab Tiachi's attention and to make an opening so that Adenmaha was able to butt in.

The body of the fake Adenmaha was the same as the original's. She was proficient in magic but couldn't fight well with weapons. That was the reason she didn't participate in the attack until now and just looked from the back.

The sword of the knight of the round table Kay was given to her but she didn't swing it. She was empty handed as she had given it back to Tae HO beforehand.

Adenmaha embraced Tiachi the moment Heda fell back.

Tiachi got bewildered. It was because there was no strength behind her attack.

Was she planning to seal his movements at least for a moment?

Tiachi didn't think for long. Whatever the motive was, he just had to shake her off.

But it was at that moment.

The moment Tiachi put strength in his arms, Tae Ho activated his saga.

[Saga: Owner of frost]

The fake Adenmaha transformed into the frost white dragon Javier.

It wasn't to fire her specialty, the ice breath. Also not to attack him with her sharp claws and fangs.

Just crushing him down.

Sitting on him with her overwhelming size.

But Tiachi was still a giant king. He didn't just let it hit him. Tiachi was already moving even before Adenmaha finished her transformation. He executed an attack in the middle of her transformation and opened up a path.

Kguaaang!

A weird sound exploded. The lower body of the frost dragon that got separated from its upper body swept the surroundings. Tiachi, that barely managed to cut Adenmaha's waist surged up.

It was like Tae Ho had expected.

"Hello once again?"

Heda butted her face in front of Tiachi.

Her smile was as beautiful as the smile the real Heda showed when she went to meet Tae Ho and was as scary as when she said 'so that was the case'.

Heda embraced Tiachi.

Tiachi, that had just surged up, couldn't do anything towards Heda. He got grabbed helplessly in the air.

And he understood.

The plan.

Everything was set up. The scene he saw beyond Heda's head explained him everything.

'Dog like bastard.'

To embrace Heda even if she was a fake.

Tae Ho surged up to the sky and glared at Tiachi with overwhelming eyes. Cuchulainn made fun of him saying that he was the one that ordered her to do that but he was also putting a cold smile.

The last attack Tae Ho prepared.

The finishing attack using the fake Valkyries.

Gae Bolg, that was concentrating strength when it landed down, released a strong aura. The spear of death started to fly towards Tiachi.

The fake Heda became smoke and disappeared. The spear of death tore the remains and passed by. It was a last attack that had no ways to dodge.

"Fuck."

Tiachi cursed out and that became his last words.

Gae Bolg pierced Tiachi's chest. It passed through his heart and then spread the curse of death through his entire body.

Tiachi didn't die instantly. It was because the death of Gae Bolg didn't let him die a clean death. An indescribable pain crushed Tiachi's body and mind.

Gae Bolg got stuck in the ground when it passed through Tiachi. The howl left by his limbs started to transform into a cracked sculpture and then started to break down.

Tae Ho took a deep breath. He looked down at Tiachi with cold eyes instead of retrieving Gae Bolg.

He opened his mouth but couldn't form a word. He broke down completely with his scream filled with malice.

And at that moment, an overwhelming amount of runes surged up from his remains. The amount was so big it was seen as a pillar of light.

It was different to when he defeated Hrumbak with Nidhogg. This time, he completely defeated him only with his strength and a perfectly made plan.

A great amount of runes entered his body. Although Tiachi was at a level lower than Hrumbak, he was still a giant king.

[Synchro Rate: 78%]

The 80% was right in front of his eyes and the accumulated runes made him be at the top even among the superior ranked warriors.

Tae Ho retrieved Gae Bolg. He also went to retrieve the weapons of the knights of the round table which the Valkyries dropped instead of facing the remaining little giants looking at him as they got surprised and stopped fighting.

‘It ended.’

Bracky's hammer crushed Itaka's head the moment Cuchulainn spoke.

&

“I worked hard. Rolled a lot. Dizzy.....”

Nidhogg mumbled with a pale face. Hraesvelg clicked his tongue because he didn't like her acting that way but he still extended his arm to support her because he did feel a bit sorry for her.

The battle had ended.

They couldn't completely exterminate the giants and evil spirits but could defeat quite a lot of them. The ones that had survived were the ones that couldn't hear Hraesvelg's name.

The rescuing team had successfully rescued all of the Valkyries. They were all exhausted because of the terrible hardships they had faced. But they were still Valkyries. They didn't forget to thank the ones that had saved them.

The warriors and the Valkyries that had regained their composure hid themselves in a secluded place.

The ones that advanced to the path going to the Temple was only a minority.

"I'm grateful to you in many ways."

Kaldea stood in the gate leading to the Temple that had been generated naturally by the system of Yggdrasil and spoke while turning around. Her golden hair that was tied up lapped as if it was her tail.

They had defeated Tiachi but it was merely the start.

Kaldea had to go the Temple as they had originally planned.

"Be careful."

Tae Ho, that had escorted her to the gate, spoke with courtesy but with sincerity.

"You certainly are simple and honest."

Kaldea giggled as if something was fun about that and then spread her arms. Tae Ho hesitated for a moment as he understood her meaning but still hugged her in the end and shared their warmth.

“I’m really grateful. I knew that you would become a big shot but I didn’t know that you would become one this fast and such a big figure. Heda’s eyes are also quite something.”

She giggled once more and then slightly pushed Tae Ho. She then looked up at him and then put playful eyes. She gave him the best blessing in that state.

“It’s not much but it’s still a gift. The completion rate would increase now right? I will keep it as a secret to Heda.”

Kaldea winked while licking her lips. Cuchulainn laughed at that and Tae Ho put an awkward smile at the guilt he felt.

“I will go for real now. Let’s meet later for sure.”

“Yes, go.”

“Right.”

Kaldea bid her farewell brightly until the end and took a deep breath. She had faced almost every kind of things as a Valkyrie but it was the first time she moved to another world. She kept feeling her heartbeat.

‘It’s not because of the blessing.’

Kaldea pressed her chest tightly to calm herself and fixed her expression. She erased her playfulness and expressed etiquette to the commander of Idun as a Valkyrie of Valhalla.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

Kaldea turned around. She then entered the gate that connected to the Temple.

The real world tree, the System of Yggdrasil, was connected with Asgard as the center and the other nine realms but it wasn’t they only system that completely passed through all the ten worlds.

Kaldea barely got out of the path of the System of Yggdrasil that

was filled with white light and stood in front of a road that she hadn't experienced until now.

It was similar to the System of Yggdrasil but different at the same time. A system that could be said to be siblings.

The path connected to the Temple was beautiful.

The cherry blossom trees that were at the sides of the path were big and had a nice fragrance. The cherry blossom flowers that fluttered along the wind landed down on the ground as if dancing.

“Wow.....”

Kaldea let out an exclamation unconsciously and her cheeks flushed.

And the one that looked at that below a tree let out a laugh. It wasn't a laugh that ridiculed her but it was the same kind as Kaldea's exclamation. It was a laughter that came out unconsciously when you say something beautiful and nice.

Kaldea hurriedly turned to look at the direction the laughter was heard at. There was a man with a big build that was covering his face with a bamboo rain hat. It seemed like he was a member that belonged to the Temple that he was wearing a korean style traditional jacket and pants. He was holding a big weapon in his shoulders but it was a kind you couldn't see in Valhalla.

The most similar thing to it was a trident but the weapon of the man was too different to the basic parts of a spear. The part of the tip of the spear wasn't a sharp blade but a weird object that was bent and had ten forks.

If the one looking at him wasn't a warrior but a farmer, they would have realized that the thing the man was holding was a farming tool instead of a weapon but Kaldea was a warrior. That was why she tilted her head a few times and then erased her doubts about the weapon. It was because she had to first express etiquette with the one she had met.

“I’m Valkyrie Kaldea of Hermod’s legion. Do you belong to the Temple?”

Kaldea hit her chest twice and expressed the etiquette of Asgard. The man flinched at the word Valkyrie and then stood up hurriedly and took off and threw his bamboo hat.

And then Kaldea was the one that flinched unavoidably. It was because the man didn’t have the head of a human but that of a pig.

But Kaldea hid her surprise and looked up at the man with her green eyes. The man smirked as if he liked that Kaldea didn’t shake greatly and then wrapped his right hand with his left one as the etiquette of the Temple followed.

“I’m the morning lion Cho Hakkai. The ones close to me call me Juh Pal Gye.” (TL: Or Zhu Bajie.)

The former enemy of the thousand poles.

The disciple of the Samjang (TL: Or Tripitakadhara) Juh Pal Gye extended his hand to Kaldea.

< Episode 42 – Great counter attack (5) > End

Episode 43/Chapter 1: Reunited (1)

The magician king Utgard Loki doubted his ears.

The Beast king Tiachi had died and his army that was guarding the path leading to the Temple had been broken down.

It was something that occurred in the outskirts of Asgard and this information was brought by the remnants of the army of the beast king that barely managed to survive.

They couldn't know who was the one that killed Tiachi.

And that fact brought a bigger chaos to the magician king.

Tiachi was one of the giant kings. He wasn't the strongest but still, he wasn't weak either. He was at least strong enough to enter the middle or upper ranks.

There were few people that could suppress that Tiachi in the battlefield and kill him.

'It's not Thor's army.'

And not the battle Gods like Thor, Ullr and Tir. Also, not the top ranked warriors that were called as the strongest of Valhalla like Sigurd and such.

Someone else.

But who? Was there someone that strong among the superior ranked warriors that hadn't returned to Valhalla?

The magician king closed his eyes for a moment and organized his thoughts and the giant of night Avalt asked in his stead.

"Speak in detail the process in how the army of the Beast king got destroyed."

Tiachi had gone out to hunt a Valkyrie and died instead but that wasn't the same for his army. Looking that an army of more than ten thousand evil spirits got broken down meant that they got

attacked by a proper army.

The little giant Turump, that had brought the information of their defeat, gulped dry saliva. It was because the aura that was released by Avalt made him feel short of breath but also because there was another problem in what he was going to report.

“It.....rolled.”

“What?”

Avalt asked back unconsciously. And the magician king, that was organizing his thoughts, also opened his eyes by reflex.

“Did you just say that it rolled?”

The giant of sea Grund, that was another one of the Five Fingers, and was standing next to the magician king spoke as if growling. Turump started to speak hurriedly at his attitude that wouldn't forgive him if he was speaking nonsense.

“It's the truth. They say that a huge black dragon appeared and started to roll on the battlefield.”

A dragon that was a hundred meters long.

It was a complete nonsense but Avalt decided to listen to Turump for now. It was because whether it was hard or easy to imagine it, if a dragon of that size really rolled on the battlefield it would have been like a real catastrophe.

“What about their army? The black dragon was alone?”

Grund frowned as Avalt asked. His eyes were implying that he believed in that nonsense. But Avalt just looked down at Turump. He said with a voice he managed to squeeze out.

“They say there was none. Valkyries and warriors of Valhalla appeared and rescued the Valkyries the Beast king had captured.....but I think they barely numbered twenty, they weren't that many in number.”

Turump was only an envoy and not a witness.

The magician king closed his eyes again. He asked something more important than imagining the black dragon rolling on the battlefield.

“Where did the black dragon go to?”

If it was a dragon that huge, it would be easy to catch your eyes even if it didn't want to. You would be able to know easily at least in which direction it headed to.

But Turump gave an unexpected answer instead.

“It's not known. They say it disappeared when the battle ended just like when it appeared.”

Appearing like a ghost.

“A black dragon.”

The magician king spoke in a low voice. He knew all of the dragons that lived in Jotunheim but couldn't easily grasp which dragon was the one that destroyed Tiachi's army.

“How did the black dragon look?”

Avallt asked right on spot and Turump answered hurriedly.

“They say it had four horns and four pair of wings. It was covered with a strong poison and also spat out a strong venom while rolling.”

The magician king frowned. No dragon with the description Turump had given existed in Jotunheim.

‘It's not only in Jotunheim.’

There was no such dragon even in Svartalfheim and Nidavellir. In addition, there were many cases that the nature of the dragon was evil. Because of that, it was even weirder for a dragon that big and strong to side with Asgard.

“It's an urgent notice!”

Another giant yelled hurriedly and came running. It was a giant

that had the same role of envoy like Turump.

There was a high possibility that the information he brought was a very important one looking that the giant came running even when the magician king was with another envoy.

“Speak.”

As soon as the magician king gave him permission, the giant that was panting and breathing roughly started to speak hurriedly.

“The army that got dispatched in Niflheim got annihilated and the Striking king Hrumbak also died.’

The magician king could only open his eyes widely at this point. The shocked Grund yelled and asked.

“Are you saying that Hela’s army destroyed the army of the Striking king? Mere dead spirits?!”

It was something hard to imagine.

Niflheim was a place that the souls that couldn’t go to Valhalla gathered at. That meant that it wasn’t excessive to say that there was no proper warrior in that place.

But of course, the story changed when they were big in numbers. There weren’t outstanding warriors that could enter Valhalla, it wasn’t that there weren’t any warriors at all.

But there was still a limit with that.

The army that got dispatched to Niflheim wasn’t merely composed by evil spirits. The strong army of giants that was lead by Hrumbak was with them.

But how could a mere army of dead spirits destroy Hrumbak’s army?

In addition, looking that the notices got transmitted only now, there was a high possibility that his army suffered damages close to extermination.

The roar Grund let out made the giant in front of him shrink his shoulders. He hurriedly opened his mouth to turn his rage to another direction.

“Th, they say they had assistance. They say that the one that destroyed the army of the Striking king wasn’t the army of the dead but a black dragon.”

A black dragon.

Turump got surprised and turned to look at the giant. Grund, that was roaring until now, gritted his teeth and turned to look at Avalt.

Avalt remained calm. He rather became colder at the word dragon and ordered the little giant.

“Tell me in detail.”

His low and calm voice also influenced the little giant. The giant that also regained his calm started to describe the sequence.

“They say that before the army started the battle against the army of the dead, a black dragon appeared and attacked the army of the Striking king. It had four horns and four pair of wings and was covered with a strong poison.”

It was the same dragon that destroyed Tiachi’s army.

“Did it roll?”

Grund asked. The little giant blinked at the sudden question and that dumb reaction made Grund explode once again.

“I asked you if it rolled!”

“It, it did. They say that one of the black dragons rolled in the battlefield!”

A black dragon rolling in the battlefield.

It was certainly the same dragon. The dragon that destroyed Hrumbak’s army and Tiachi’s army were the same dragon.

But that wasn't all. Avalt didn't only get bewitched at the word 'black dragon'. He caught another important piece of information that was hidden in the report of the giant.

"One of the black dragons? Are you saying there were more?"

Grund also got surprised and turned to look at the giant. The little giant answered hurriedly.

"They say there were about a dozen dragons but only two of them fought directly. There were more than ten dragons in the sky."

Black dragons that amounted to a dozen.

If you took into account the strength each dragon had, they were a number that could be called as an army of dragons.

But the magician king grasped a truth the moment he heard the story.

There was a high probability that the dragons in the sky were illusions. Only the two that fought directly were real ones.

"Did Hrumbak die by the black dragon?"

The giant answered immediately at the answer of the magician king."

"They say so. But...they say that the one that made the last attack was someone riding on it."

Someone riding on the black dragon.

Someone that could control that black dragon.

They couldn't come up with an answer easily and couldn't even guess the identity of the black dragon.

But it was at that moment. The giant came up with a clue he hadn't even thought about.

"They say that an illusion of a huge golden apple tree appeared in the middle of the battlefield when the Striking king Hrumbak died."

It was as absurd as the story of the dragon rolling on the battlefield.

For an illusion of a golden apple tree to appear while they were fighting.

But that wasn't the case for the magician king and also for Avalt and Grund.

And there was someone else.

Loki, that was hanging on the walls of the castle, put a smile. He laughed even though he was about to die. He let out a clear laugh that surged up from the bottom of his lungs.

Grund glared at that Loki and the magician king looked at him with cold eyes. Loki received those sights with joy.

The one that represented the golden apple tree.

There were really few people that did that while fighting even in Valhalla. No, it wasn't few but there was only one people.

“Idun's warrior.”

He wasn't dead. He survived. And that fact made Loki realize of one more truth.

Odin was also alive. Odin would be alive for sure.

The Striking king that had attacked Niflheim was dead.

The Beast king Tiachi, that was guarding the path that led to the Temple also died.

This wasn't something that would end just by having two giants die.

Niflheim would move to help Asgard.

And the Temple would dispatch reinforcements be it small or big in numbers.

But that wasn't all. There was one more fact that was a terrible thing for the giants.

Idun's warrior, that had destroyed the army of the Striking king and the Beast king, was in excellent condition.

He would appear once again by controlling that black dragon.

And it turned out as they expected.

The sad news of the Striking king and Beast king was only the start.

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If you looked at the giants from another perspective, they also belonged to the animal category. Because of that it was important to eat, sleep and do their necessities like any other animals.

Asgard was quite a troublesome land for the invading army.

And the reason for that was simple. It was because compared to its vast land, there were too few people living in it.

The number of villages and cities was too small and this meant that there were almost no adversaries to plunder.

Of course, some of them were able to self suffice themselves because there were big forests near them but it was impossible to provide supplies stably for the evil spirits that amounted to a hundred thousand and the giants that ate ten more times than humans.

because of that, the giants set up a supply route in a long and complicated way. From Jotunheim to the front lines, and the front lines to Valhalla and important points of it.

And right now, one of the supply routes was burning. The black smoke that surged up with the red flames was a really terrible sight.

But there was still something beautiful in that.

An illusion of a golden apple tree.

The warriors of Valhalla, that had set the place on fire, cheered

while standing below the smoke. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the illusion of the apple tree was already a symbol of the counterattack.

Rasgrid, that was standing on the front after defeating the giants and evil spirits, dropped her sword and looked at the golden apple tree. Precisely speaking, she looked at Idun's warrior that was standing at the center of the illusion.

He was reliable. She felt a part of her relax when she looked at his back.

Since when did it turn out like this?

At first, he was merely a lowest ranked warrior that had a special side in him.

Rasgrid put on a warm smile that didn't suit her nickname of the ice princess and then a blunt voice was heard at her side.

"You can't. There are already a lot."

"Right, right. You can't. Too many. But what many?"

They were Adenmaha and Nidhogg respectively.

Compared to Nidhogg, that was asking purely while tilting her head, Adenmaha's eyes were mixed with bluntness, eagerness and fondness of a woman that had fallen in love but also embarrassment.

Rasgrid ended up laughing unconsciously.

"That's not the case."

So there is no need to worry. She was merely happy and grateful that she was able to be together with the great warrior in front of her eyes.

Adenmaha let out a sigh of relief in her embarrassment when she heard Rasgrid's answer. She felt more embarrassed than when she told Sigrun that she couldn't do it.

But it was at that moment.

A group of people was running to the warriors burning down the supply route. They had gathered and came to this place after they saw the flames and the black smoke and the golden apple tree that surged up in the middle of that.

“Sigrun! Gudrun!”

Adenmaha opened her eyes widely and yelled. It was because there were really familiar people among the group that was running towards them.

“Senior Adenmaha!”

Sigrun and Gudrun also recognized Adenmaha but they weren't alone. The lowest ranked warriors of Idun's legion that had gone out to defend the rear were behind the two of them.

Nidhogg decided to feel happy without knowing what it was about as Adenmaha was also feeling happy.

This kind of regrouping wasn't the first.

Tae Ho had attacked the small bases of the giants and supply routes and set up the golden apple. It wasn't only to claim that Idun's warrior had come to get the giants.

The signal sending to the warriors of Valhalla.

A symbol appealing for the survivors to gather.

There were several survivors gathered everywhere. Because of that, a weird occurrence that their forces increased every time they fought was happening.

The Valkyries that got rescued from Tiachi previously also raised their weapons. There were already twenty Valkyries in Tae Ho's army and the number of warriors amounted a hundred.

Adenmaha, that was feeling joy at the reencounter, turned her head. And Rasgrid, that was looking at Adenmaha with warm eyes, also did the same.

It was because there was someone flying towards them hurriedly.

It was a Valkyrie that had transformed into a swan. Tae Ho dispel the illusion and landed on the ground when he sensed her approach. The swan also landed down almost at the same time as Tae Ho and transformed into a woman. It was none other than Valkyrie Hrist of Hermod's legion.

“Idun's commander, the army of the giants is approaching. It's the force that the giant king Tauchi is leading himself.”

Because the warriors of Valhalla wouldn't have been the only ones that had seen the supply route burn down.

Tae Ho nodded. He then looked at the Valkyries and warriors that had gathered and were waiting for his orders and then ordered with a refreshing face.

“The enemy is coming. We will do as we did until now. Tactical retreat.”

They wouldn't fight and pull back.

The warriors of Valhalla also started to smile like Tae Ho at his order. The Valkyries also raised their voices.

“Tactical retreat!”

“Tactical retreat!”

They wouldn't fight. They would execute a guerrilla attack against the giants that were slow in comparison to them.

‘Evil bastard. You are just like a fish that has entered a pond.’

‘It's basic tactic of a hit and run.’

Tae Ho answered Cuchulainn gladly and then retreated first. He was now escaping from the enemy but Adenmaha and the Valkyries exclaimed at his manly look and that was the same for the warriors of Valhalla.

“Idun's warrior!”

Tauchi let out a howl as he arrived a beat later. Tae Ho heard his enraged howl from far away and put a smile.

Five days since he defeated the Beast king Tiachi.

Tae Ho was waiting for the moment.

< Episode 43 – Reunited (1) > End

Episode 43/Chapter 2: Reunited (2)

“For Asgard and the nine realms!”

“For Asgard and the nine realms!”

“Wahaha!”

The warriors who were gathered in one place laughed and raised their drinks. There had been many that enjoyed a time like this since the invasion of the giants over Asgard started.

The place the warriors of Valhalla were having a feast at was one of the hidden bases of Asgard. They had been made in case Asgard was taken over and it also served as a shelter, as it was located deep underground.

“Warriors, lower your voices a bit. It will be big trouble if we get heard by the giants.”

Reginleif stood on the table and spoke with an exaggerated voice. It was a kind of joke but it seemed like it worked well or the warriors were acting formal, as they grabbed their stomachs and laughed.

“Kukuku.”

Reginleif also laughed, because she was in a good mood, as her joke had worked. She turned to look at the warriors and raised her horn cup.

“Hey, let’s raise one more toast. What shall we toast for this time?”

An answer came back as soon as she asked. The warriors yelled in one voice, as if they had agreed to it beforehand.

“For Idun.”

“For Idun’s warrior!”

The warriors raised their cups once again and the Valkyries did

the same. Everyone in that place became one and called out Idun's name.

It was because they wouldn't have been able to set up this feast if it wasn't for Idun's warrior. They wouldn't have been able to gather once again like this.

Adenmaha trembled slightly at the sincere voices of the warriors. She kept smiling, because she felt really good.

It was because she felt happy that Tae Ho had been recognized by everyone but there was one more reason. Adenmaha looked at the two people in front of her and her eyes reddened.

"I'm glad. You were safe."

"You too senior."

Sigrun and Gudrun, and especially Gudrun, answered with red eyes just like her. Sigrun stuttered, her face red because of the alcohol.

"The souls of the warriors that died the first day headed to Valhalla but as for the ones that died after that, their souls... the reason for that was that Valhalla got sealed."

Sigrun and Gudrun were safe but not all the warriors of Idun's legion were safe as well.

Five from twelve.

That was the number of warriors that had lost their lives under the lead of the two Valkyries.

Sigrun closed her eyes tightly. The moment when the warriors faced their second death still lingered in front of her eyes.

It wasn't a glorious and heroic death on the battlefield. Most of the warriors had died by the natural disasters generated by the magician king.

Of course, no one thought about denigrating their deaths but they couldn't do anything about feeling bad. Sigrun felt fearful.

What would happen from now on? Would the happiness they felt today continue?

Adenmaha grabbed her hand and then smirked a bit like a fool when Sigrun raised her head reflexively.

“Everything will turn out well, so don’t worry. Okay?”

Adenmaha also felt uneasy but she still hit her chest and Sigrun ended up laughing at that. She nodded and answered that she would do so.

“But senior, can you introduce her once again?”

Gudrun changed the subject with a cheerful voice. Her eyes were directed to the black-haired beauty who kept sticking to Adenmaha since the battle had ended.

“Oh, look at me.”

She had forgotten about the introductions because the happiness the reencounter brought was too great. Of course, she did tell them her name but she didn’t have to stop there.

“This is Nidhogg, just like I told you before. She’s a Valkyrie of our legion, so she’s your junior. Should I say that she’s the maknae?”

Nidhogg blinked as Adenmaha put her hand on her shoulders and then smiled happily.

“I like junior.”

Being a junior meant that she had seniors. It meant that she wasn’t alone. That’s why she really liked the ring to it.

“I’m Nidhogg. Tae Ho Master’s first... second dragon.”

Nidhogg was about to say that she was the first dragon but hurriedly edited her words when she sensed Adenmaha glaring at her.

Adenmaha embraced Nidhogg once again because she was really

cute and Nidhogg hugged her back.

It was quite a heartwarming scene but Sigrun and Gudrun turned to look at each other instead of smiling warmly. Gudrun frowned and asked in a low voice, “Um... senior. Is Nidhogg that Nidhogg?”

She was referring to the black dragon, Nidhogg.

Adenmaha nodded.

“She is that Nidhogg. She’s really nice and big. But I think that she’s a bit too fat.”

A reaction came back instantly as Adenmaha added some weird words at the end.

“Not fat, not fat. Adenmaha is lying. I really like Adenmaha, but slightly dislike her.”

Nidhogg pouted and started to grumble but Adenmaha embraced her a bit tighter and whispered.

“But I like Nidhogg?”

“Ehehe. Actually I also like you.”

Nidhogg buried her face in Adenmaha’s chest. Her posture became quite weird because of the difference in height but Nidhogg still liked being embraced like that the best.

Sigrun and Gudrun blinked. Adenmaha, who induced this situation on purpose, smiled brightly and patted Nidhogg’s back.

“Just as you see, she’s harmless. No, is she harmful because she makes my heart beat roughly because of her cuteness?”

“Senior, you are still the same.”

“Right.”

Adenmaha’s eyes sharpened as Sigrun and Gudrun spoke exasperatedly.

“Wait, what does that mean?”

What could that mean?

Then when the two of them looked at each other and were about to bring out an excuse...

“She is like a lone beautiful flower that bloomed in the battlefield! For Siri!”

“Hey! Bracky!”

Bracky raised his cup with a bright face and Siri yelled with a red one.

The warriors of Valhalla laughed at that and enjoyed themselves.

“How noisy.”

“Right. It’s nice to see this.”

Tae Ho answered Rasgrid’s words. He was a bit worried about Bracky’s future, as he was being dragged to a corner by his ear by Siri, but would something really happen?

‘Poor Rolph. My eyes are really accurate.’

He had noticed it when she had heard that he resembled his younger brother.

Cuchulainn sympathized with Rolph and clicked his tongue and meanwhile Rasgrid and Tae Ho wore awkward expressions as they looked at Siri kicking Bracky’s shin to make him collapse.

“They... are a good match, right? That’s the case, right?”

“Probably.”

Siri dragged Bracky once again and went somewhere out of sight.

‘Hey, chase them quickly. Or at least throw Gae Bolg near them. Let me see something nice.’

Tae Ho ignored Cuchulainn’s nonsense like always and concentrated on Rasgrid. She continued looking at her cup, and then spoke while looking at Tae Ho.

“Is the next dispatch tomorrow?”

They didn't have the time to stay in one place for long. Tae Ho nodded once and then answered while thinking of Asgard's map.

“They will also be strengthening their supply routes, so this time I'm thinking of striking a place that's a bit farther. We can also provoke Tauchi a bit more. It would be good if more chasers stuck to us.”

There were several reasons why Tae Ho was roaming the outskirts and executing a guerrilla tactic.

They would weaken the army of the magician king surrounding Valhalla at least a little. He would make the main army head out and decrease their numbers.

Also, at the same time, it would pull their attention to them. It would be impossible to make them concentrate on his group completely but they would still lose focus a bit.

It had been a success until now.

Tae Ho had diminished the supplies by burning several supply routes and had also made the giant king Tauchi get outside. In addition, the survivors of Valhalla had been added.

But that wasn't enough.

The giants would surely simplify the supply route and strengthen their armies at any time.

There was also a limit to the number of survivors they could muster from outside.

The aftereffect of the Great Disaster that the magician king had generated was much bigger than they had imagined. All the fortresses in the outskirts had collapsed and many warriors and Valkyries had lost their lives during the following invasion of the giants.

The reason Freya had sealed up Valhalla was because she could

only do so. She didn't have any other options.

It was the sixth day since he had returned to Asgard.

Tae Ho was waiting for the right moment.

Valhalla still needed more time...

...Time until Odin finished with what he was doing outside of Asgard.

...Time until Kaldea, who had gone to the Temple, returned with reinforcements.

Tae Ho knew of it, unlike the other warriors.

He knew that Valhalla wouldn't be able to endure for much longer. It would be able to last a few more days, at most.

"Odin will soon transmit good news."

Rasgrid spoke while smiling. It seemed as if her smile was faked but she was trying hard to make Tae Ho feel comfortable even by a little.

Tae Ho also smiled, because Rasgrid would also be feeling uneasy. It was good to laugh, at least for the other.

"Of course. Kaldea would have already reached the Temple by now, right?"

"Probably. Honestly speaking, I can't say for sure as I don't know much about the Temple. But I believe Kaldea will be doing well."

Moving to another world wasn't common, even for Valkyries. Even Hildegrid, the Valkyrie of Freya's legion, who was the one to bring Tae Ho to this world, had said that she had only experienced moving to another world once.

'Don't worry too much. The Temple has a blood alliance with Asgard since the Great War, so they will also send reinforcements this time.'

Tae Ho nodded at Cuchulainn's words.

Rasgrid, who was aware of her surroundings, raised her cup lightly and said, “Let Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

“Let Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

Tae Ho also raised his cup and said the same words. He thought of Heda and Idun and drank from his cup.

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The night deepened.

The magician king, Utgard Loki, looked at the seal that was covering Valhalla entirely.

It was a circular barrier that emanated a faint light. It had a simple structure that only blocked things from outside and inside but it was also quite sturdy. You could say that that was the archetype of the great barrier surrounding Midgard.

The magician king opened his eyes sharply. The seal was now weakened to the extent that he could see it with his eyes, even when he didn’t use magic. It would probably be able to endure for four more days.

‘I won’t get toyed with by you.’

The magician king had ordered the giant king, Tauchi, to chase Idun’s warrior but he hadn’t thought about it further than that.

It was because his objective was clear anyways. Pouring in forces just to catch him was a really childish thing to do.

A decisive battle in a short term.

This battle wasn’t a long term one at all. He would send in forces to Valhalla when its seal broke and invade it. He would kill the Gods and warriors of Asgard and destroy the last fortresses completely.

After that, he just had to regroup with Harmarti and face Thor.

It was quite painful to have the supply routes cut but it hadn’t

become a problem as they still had supplies for fifteen more days. In addition, they would be able to plunder the supplies of Valhalla when they took it over.

The battle had already tilted to one side. Idun's warrior wouldn't be able to influence the battle greatly just by executing a guerrilla tactic.

But there was still something bothering him.

One doubt remained in him.

'How did it happen?'

Didn't Idun's warrior die by the World Wolf?

Or perhaps, he had mistaken Idun's warrior for another warrior.

It was entirely possible. Everything had happened in an instant and the magician king hadn't seen Idun's warrior directly. He had only heard what others told him.

In addition, it was also true that he was more focused on Loki and Odin than on Idun's warrior.

'There's a high possibility that another warrior died in his stead on that day.'

It was more natural to think that way. It was because none other than the World Wolf had gulped him down.

'But...'

If the one that had trespassed that day was really Idun's warrior...

And if he was still alive regardless of that and was executing a guerrilla tactic...

The magician king closed his eyes. He could only think of one name.

'Odin.'

The king of Gods. He was born with the fate to die by the World

Wolf but regardless of that, didn't stop resisting. So he was a childish yet clever God of War.

There were also possibilities that he was alive.

But those possibilities were low. It was because he had suffered severe wounds even before getting eaten by the World Wolf. Perhaps, Odin had made Idun's warrior escape alone by struggling for the last time.

'That's more likely.'

It was more likely, because Odin's aura had completely disappeared. Even the World Wolf, which was connected to him by fate, was certain that he had disappeared.

But the magician king didn't come to quick conclusions. He still took into account the possibility that Odin was alive.

'But it won't change much.'

Even if Odin was alive and the black dragon Idun's warrior controlled was Nidhogg...

Four days from now.

It was the time left until the seal on Valhalla broke.

< Episode 43 – Reunited (2) > End

Episode 43/Chapter 3: Reunited (3)

The throne of the king of Gods, Odin, was empty.

Freya looked at the throne, flashily adorned with gold decorations, and then sat on the floor next to the throne instead of the seat.

She was the second most important person in Valhalla.

When Odin lost Balder, who was the original successor, in the Great War, he had selected Freya to be the new heir. Because of that, the empty throne of Odin now belonged to Freya.

But she didn't have any thoughts of sitting on it. It was because she would really admit that Odin was dead if she sat on it.

“What are you doing like a fool when he's really dead?”

Freya cursed out in a low voice and laughed like a fool.

“Bastard.”

If he had set up that kind of great plan he should have at least told her. For him to have planned things with Loki and have tricked her and the whole world...

And if he had prepared to that extent, he should have succeeded. He should have come out victorious, as the God of War.

“Bastard.”

She cursed out once again but her anger wasn't soothed at all. Why did he step up directly? Why did someone that was supposed to be the King go to the front lines? What of the others if he died?

Freya cried; cried in a heartbroken way. It wasn't because she was scared of what might happen after the seal broke. It was because she wanted to see her king, who was sitting in a corner like always while wearing an absentminded expression.

“Bastard.”

Freya cursed for the last time and then wiped off her tears. Her face had become a mess because her makeup had been erased by her tears but she was still beautiful.

“There’s only four days left.”

Freya raised her voice a bit. She wasn’t talking to herself but to the one that had entered the room.

“Are you talking about the day until the seal breaks?” Ragnar asked in a low voice after entering the room and closing the door.

Freya nodded a few times and then lightly touched her face with her hands, which had magic power behind them. Her messy makeup was cleaned up.

Freya let out a long sigh. She, who was the Goddess of beauty, was beautiful even without any decorations. It rather gave another kind of charm, because of her neat and tidy look.

“The speed in which the seal is breaking is getting faster by the hour. It’s between four and five days but you can say that it will break in only four days.”

Freya stood up from her place and looked at the throne of the king once again. In the end, she steeled herself and approached it. She then closed her eyes tightly and sat on the throne.

Ragnar just looked steadily at Freya. She put on a smile. It was the bright and cheerful smile of a kid that made her crying from before seem like a lie.

“What could be happening outside?”

The seal of Valhalla blocked the inside from the outside perfectly. Because of that Freya couldn’t know what was happening outside at all; like how many Valkyries succeeded in reaching the Temple and Olympus and how many got out of Asgard.

“But I’m still glad that you are here. Ragnar Lodbrok, great King of the Vikings.”

Ragnar was the one who told her of Odin's death and the situation he was in.

If he hadn't been there, Freya would have waited for Odin to return instead of sealing up Valhalla. But he had said that Odin died and Freya didn't deny it. No, she did so inwardly a thousand times and rejected it to the point that she merely admitted it, but she still thought quickly and made a quick judgement. Instead of being swept by the giants and the great fire, she sealed up Valhalla to buy a bit more time and made the inspiring deed of reserving the forces of Valhalla.

‘Can it really be called an inspiring deed?’

Freya mumbled to herself and then extended her hand to the air. She lightly clenched the air and pulled and then a beautiful necklace, which was difficult to describe, appeared in her hands.

Brisingamen.

It was the name of the most beautiful and luxurious necklace of Asgard, which suited the most beautiful Goddess, Freya.

Freya wore the necklace on her long white neck. It was an object she treasured so much that she put it in the treasury, aside from when something important arose, but her heart still beat like the first time every time, even though she had obtained it a hundred years ago.

“How is it? Pretty, right?” Freya asked with the pure expression of a kid.

Freya wearing the Brisngamen was so pretty that she looked like she was covered in bright white light.

“You really are beautiful and that that isn't just an empty compliment.”

Ragnar gave up on expressing himself poetically and spoke in a simple way. But Freya nodded, as she liked the sincerity held in his simple words.

“That’s obvious. Do you know how hard I worked to get this?”

She laughed like a kid once again and then dropped her shoulders exhaustedly.

“I won’t simply die. I’m the prettiest Goddess of Beauty of Asgard, the Goddess of Magic... I’m planning to crush the heads of the giants and also their souls,” Freya said as she leaned back on the throne.

What remained instead of the purity and beauty of a kid was a Goddess of Magic faced with death.

“We may win,” Ragnar said.

There was nothing like passion burning from his wolf-like eyes but there also wasn’t the coldness of someone that had given up.

Freya nodded.

“Right, we don’t know the situation outside so a prince riding on a white horse may appear to rescue us. Although what I’m expecting is the prince riding on lightning.”

The one she was actually expecting the most was Thor and his army.

Wouldn’t he defeat the frost giant king Harmarti and come to rescue Valhalla?

Wouldn’t they be able to drive back the giants with only the strength of Asgard?

Freya’s clever mind didn’t accept that expectation. The probabilities for that were too low. Waiting for reinforcements from the Temple and Olympus was more realistic.

‘Although even that won’t be easy.’

The Temple and Olympus were also at war with the ones hoping for the destruction of the world. They wouldn’t be able to help them that easily.

Ragnar also knew what Freya did but he still hadn't given up. The walls of Valhalla were high and there were still many warriors.

‘I’m really glad.’

She was really glad that Ragnar was there. If he wasn't, she would have already collapsed inwardly.

Freya snickered and fixed her expression. She assumed the same curling position as Odin and spoke to Ragnar.

“For the last of the last... you know right? I’m sorry to have put you in this.”

“I’m satisfied only with being able to take down one more giant.”

Freya was planning on self destruction. She would drag the most giants possible near her and explode the entirety of Valhalla.

The giants wouldn't be safe if it was a strength that could split Asgard in two.

‘But of course, the same goes for us.’

The last method.

Ragnar remained calm and Freya understood why he was the greatest king among the many Viking kings.

The warrior that she wanted but couldn't lay her hands on.

She didn't go telling this to others because she was embarrassed of it, but Idun's warrior wasn't the first. The first one had been that great Viking king, Ragnar Lodbrok.

“And that kid?”

Ragnar wore a calm smile for the first time since he entered the room. He thought of the Goddess that was wearing the same eyes as Freya and answered.

“She's also preparing for the last.”

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The residence of Idun's legion was silent.

It was different to the other legions that were preparing for the last battle.

“Originally, this should be the normal deal.”

Heda looked at the drill ground where the warriors were training and spoke in a low voice.

Idun's legion was originally quiet. It was a silence that had maintained itself for a hundred years since the Great War.

It had become noisy after that but it didn't last long. Only two months lasted since the lowest ranked warriors entered the legion and raised their voices at night and in the afternoon.

However, regardless of that, she felt like a hole had been made in a part of her chest. No, it was certainly a big hole.

Heda walked for a bit. The rock serpent, McLaren, was lying down quietly, as if it had become a rock. The wives of Rolo and his children who were near recognized Heda but they simply lowered their heads calmly because of the heavy atmosphere pressing down on Valhalla.

Heda put on a faint smile to calm down Rolo's children and continued to walk. Scathach was standing in front of the lake and looking into the distance.

‘I thought that looking at the destruction of the world once was enough.’

She didn't say that out loud but Heda could still hear it. Scathach greeted Heda with her hands while holding a spear with her hand. Heda answered silently and Scathach looked away once again.

What had happened to Rolo?

She had heard from Adenmaha and Merlin that he had remained in Midgard, but was he still safe?

What about Sigrun and Gudrun?

...And the new lowest-ranked warriors that had entered.

She mentioned each one of them and kept repeating their names. It was because she wanted to delay mentioning the last person the most she could.

Heda stopped walking. She was soon in front of the wooden docks. Idun's residence had got bigger, to the point that it was unrecognizable, but this place remained the same.

The old wooden dock and the shrine made with rocks.

She hadn't seen that he had died.

So she couldn't be certain that he was dead.

That's why she believed. She didn't give up. She forced herself to think like that.

Heda started to walk once again. She entered the silent temple and stood in the middle.

Her surroundings changed. It became a plain, and a big golden apple tree, which seemed like it would touch the ceiling, appeared in front of her eyes.

Heda walked a bit more and then saw a tombstone. The names of Bragi and the previous Idun were written on it and the names of the ones that had died while protecting her were also listed on it.

Heda extended her hand and touched the tombstone. She leaned back on it and extended her hands. A veil that hid her eyes was formed from light and appeared in Heda's hands.

Idun's and Bragi's daughter, Heda.

The last Valkyrie of Idun's legion.

The last survivor.

"Idun," Heda said and then put on the veil. She then woke up the second existence, that had been silent, as if she was asleep.

"Heda."

Idun spoke.

Asgard had needed a new Idun when the previous one died but the candidate, Heda, was lacking in several aspects to become a God of high stature.

In addition, she was in an unstable state mentally because she had seen the warriors of Idun's legion, whom she viewed as older brothers and sisters killed right in front of her eyes. She was at a situation that she could never succeed the throne of a God.

But Asgard still needed a new Idun. Heda didn't just remain as Heda alone after the half-forced ceremony.

The second identity was the Goddess of Youth and Life.

The new Idun had received the strength and task from the previous Idun.

Heda and Idun recognized each other. Idun embraced and cared for Heda's heart, which was dying because of the injuries she suffered. She had helped her so that she became able to stand up again.

Heda treated Idun as her older and younger sister and that was the same likewise.

There were few people that knew of their secret. Ragnar knew of Idun's existence but thought that the original body and conscience was still Heda's. And the same went for Odin.

But it was different for Freya. She treated Heda and Idun as different people and so tried to always differentiate the two of them. It wasn't because she disliked one of them. It was because she treated them both as Goddesses of Asgard.

When the last battle came after the seal of Valhalla broke, Idun was planning to step forward and fight and Heda agreed with her thoughts.

Idun embraced her own shoulders. Then she leaned back on the

tombstone and said, “Um, Heda. I have something I want to tell you.”

“What is it, Idun?”

“I also like Tae Ho.”

She spoke shyly, like a kid. Heda let out a sigh and nodded.

“I knew it.”

“I’m sorry.”

He only knew about Heda and the fool that was Heda’s warrior that only looked for her but she still ended up giving her heart to him. She tried not to do it but ended up falling for him anyways.

“I realized it when you gave him the best blessing. Did you know that I yelled inwardly at that time?”

Idun pouted as Heda spoke playfully. In the end her face started to flush and she let out a snort.

“I don’t want to hear that from someone that did all sorts of things while knowing that I was watching.”

“All, all sorts of things?”

“And it had to be in front of the shrine.”

Idun drove her back as Heda started to speak incoherently. It would have been quite a strange scene to look at them from a distance as they were two people in one body but fortunately Idun and Heda were the only ones in that place.

“So that was the case. Idun looked at us while hiding in the darkness. So that was the case.”

“Heda did it too. You did it on purpose even though you knew that I was watching.”

Heda and Idun attacked each other and then started to giggle at the same time.

“He should be alive, right?”

“He must be. I couldn’t feel that he died. Only that the connection was cut off.”

“Will we be able to meet him again?”

“Certainly.”

There were four days until the seal broke.

After that, only war and death awaited them.

That was why it was a dream-like story. And if he really was alive, they hoped he wouldn’t even appear. They hoped that at least he could stay alive.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

“For Idun’s legion, for Idun’s warrior.”

Heda and Idun spoke. They were resolved as the Goddess of Youth and Life and the representative Valkyrie of the legion.

And four days after that...

A time close to midday...

The seal of Valhalla broke down.

< Episode 43 – Reunited (3) > End

Episode 43/Chapter 4: Reunited (4)

A crack formed on the curtain of light which was emitting seven different colors, like a rainbow.

The fragments of the barrier broke along with the sound of glass breaking and then scattered and fell down.

The inside and the outside which had been isolated were connected once again. You could see the outside from inside and also could see the inside from outside.

Valhalla was huge.

The fortress, which had 540 doors was really huge and the three layers of walls were thick and solid.

Freya recognized that the number of their forces were insufficient to protect all of Valhalla and because of that she gave up entirely on the part of the fog lake that had the islands of the legions in it.

The entire force of Valhalla was about 600,000.

Among that, the army Thor led was 300,000, and the ones that were at the border were 100,000.

If the forces that were scattered in the other worlds were excluded, then the forces that remained in Asgard were about 150,000.

80,000 of them were Steel warriors and the remaining 70,000 could be said to be the active warriors of Valhalla.

A number of 150,000 wasn't small at all. The warriors of Valhalla and the Steel warriors decided to think as Vikings.

When you died wasn't important.

The important thing was how you died.

The warriors of Valhalla stood on the castle wall and the Steel

warriors stood shoulder to shoulder with them.

The Valkyries of each legion wore their armor and raised their weapons. They numbered 5,000.

It was the addition of the pre-Valkyries that received training in Freya's Valkyrie training center.

The Gods were together with the warriors.

There weren't only the strong warrior Gods like the God of the Sea, Njord, or the watchman God.

Gefion, the Goddess of fertility, led two big, strong white cows that were used to plow the fields and got on the walls. Forseti, the God of Justice, who held conversations to be important, raised his weapon only for this day.

They didn't discriminate between men and women. Everyone that could fight raised their weapons and became determined to face the giants.

The barrier breaking down was a beautiful thing to witness. The trumpeters looked at the rainbow light scatter and blew their horn trumpets.

They saw the outside view, and shock and silence spread among the grandiose sound of the horn trumpet.

A scenery which was bigger than they had expected awaited the warriors of Valhalla.

A black group of evil spirits covered the entire land. It was impossible to grasp their numbers but they would certainly easily amount to hundreds of thousands.

There were also quite a lot of giants. There were dozens of huge giants that seemed like they would touch the sky and also so many small giants that if their numbers were added, they would amount to several thousands.

There were monsters in the sky and on the ground. The monsters

that had been born and that grew in the land of harsh coldness, Jotunheim, smothered the sound of the horn trumpet with their roars.

There was no light in the sky. The flying-type monsters and evil spirits that gathered like clouds were covering the place where the sun should be at.

In the middle of the group which had made the sky turn black was the most evil and powerful frost dark dragon, Balcazar.

Freya, who had climbed to the highest tower of the fortress, gulped saliva down a dry throat. Clenching her fists, she calmed herself down.

Her eyes looked into the distance, to see the magician king Utgard Loki, who was seated in a broken fortress.

Loki also saw Freya. The distance between them was very great but that much of a distance didn't pose an obstacle to the two masters of magic.

"I will kill you and I will erase Valhalla from the world," magician king said. It wasn't a provocation but a simple claim.

Freya just laughed. Her shoulders trembled a bit but she couldn't do anything about it. She then hit the ground with the staff she was holding and claimed, "Come, king of giants who will soon die."

The magician king laughed. He made a light gesture and then the giants that were in his surroundings blew their horn trumpets. The army of evil spirits started their attack under the great sound that seemed like it would split the world.

The ground shook and moved.

Only one part of the army of the giants was moving but it seemed like the ground was squirming nevertheless.

The sides of Valhalla were open and the giants were surrounding

Valhalla with their great number but the battles weren't occurring in all of the fortress.

The reason for that was because of the existence of the wide, deep moats that covered the fortress.

However, the evil spirits still charged towards the moat, which was no different from a cliff. Their eyes seemed fearless, as if they were under a magic that removed their consciousness.

The magician king moved his finger. The flying-type evil spirits that were covering the sky split in two and the sky opened up and then a catastrophe started to fall down from the huge sky.

Meteorite summoning magic.

It had been controlled so that it fell the moment the barrier of Valhalla broke.

Freya looked at the huge burning meteorite and recited a chant. She also had been prepared for attacks like this.

Freya started to sweat. The sky swayed at her chant and a huge space door opened up and engulfed the meteorite. It then made the meteorite fall on the heads of the evil spirits instead of Valhalla.

The meteorite fell in the outer ranges, where the evil spirits were charging at. Much of its speed was lessened after it passed through the space door but it was still a huge catastrophe from the sky. It easily erased thousands of evil spirits from this world.

However, it was a really small loss compared to their overall force.

The magician king laughed and rolled his finger. He activated the real trump card he had prepared for Freya, who had concentrated solely on opening the space door, wouldn't be able to stop.

The ground shook and then started to rise up from the moats.

It was a huge scale of magic that not even the magician king would be able to execute easily, but he still accomplished it.

Part of it was thanks to him having prepared it beforehand but it was also because he had offered sacrifices suitable to it.

The magic continued for about ten seconds.

About 10,000 evil spirits, which were standing on the magic circle prepared by the magician king, faced their deaths without even knowing the cause. Their lives and magic forces were drained from them and they fell down and became withered lumber.

Freya tried desperately to stop the magic of the magician king but she couldn't. It was a magic that had been executed with a time difference and Freya couldn't offer sacrifices, unlike the magician king. There was a limit to her obstruction because the difference in their magic was also great.

The ground that rose up filled up one-fourth of the moats but that was enough. The evil spirits started to advance towards the fortress, like a wave.

Attacks also started from the sky. Countless evil spirits and monsters began to fall down like rain the moment the black frost dragon, Balcazar, roared.

Freya breathed roughly. She moved her fingers and activated the several defensive magics that were installed in Valhalla.

The Valkyries flew up. Their charge whilst magical wings was really valiant and beautiful, but they were like moths flying towards a fierce fire.

Battles started in the walls as well.

The evil spirits hung on the stairs and threw hooks towards the wall but the warriors of Valhalla activated their various sagas and stopped the evil spirits.

Lightning fell and flames arose. Strong gales and blades of wind swept upwards on the walls of the fortress.

However, the fortress was just too wide and there were a lot of

evil spirits. The giants and monsters bodies' were hit with the attacks of the warriors of Valhalla.

Ragnar, who was making commands at the walls instead of Freya, who was drawing up magic circles, admitted that defeat was sure if they kept going like this.

It was only a matter of time.

But even so, they couldn't just give up. The warriors of Valhalla and the Gods were struggling, even though they knew that only destruction was waiting for them.

Balcazar opened its huge mouth. He bit the air and the evil spirits and Valkyries were crushed.

Balcazar closed its mouth again. It crushed the things that had gotten stuck in its teeth and then looked at the Valkyries and Steel warriors, which were flying up like moths.

Balcazar, which had experience from participating in the Great War, discovered the one that was more eye-catching than the others.

It thought of the name of the woman that emanated a particularly bright light among the beautifully shining Valkyries.

The Queen of the land of Darkness, Scathach.

Just why was she here? Why was she wearing the same uniform as the Valkyries?

It wasn't important. Balcazar laughed and then started to fly towards Scathach.

The Goddess of Life and Youth, Idun, was in the middle of the second wall of the three layers. She spread her arms and released her divine power.

An aura of life covered the warriors of Valhalla. It gave them the energy and strength to fight.

But it wasn't enough. Heda, who was more proficient in battle

than Idun, knew it but she remained silent. Idun also concentrated solely on releasing divine power silently.

How long had passed since the battle started?

Only tens of minutes had passed but death overflowed from the sky and the ground.

The evil spirits only looked forwards; and the giants also did the same.

The monsters in the sky also looked at Valhalla.

That's why they couldn't see it.

The warriors on the fortress couldn't recognize it at first.

"For Asgard and the nine realms!"

It was a low voice; and that voice started from behind the battlefield. Precisely speaking, it rang from below the earth.

Part of the group of evil spirits looked at their feet. The ground started to shake and at some point it split downwards, as if a monster had opened its mouth.

The evil spirits fell down that hole but then surged up once again. It was the result of having been hit by an overwhelmingly huge ship...

...A ship made with the toenails and claws of the dead, the Naglfar.

Several huge ships appeared behind the evil spirits and an army of the dead, which numbered a hundred thousand, poured out of the split earth.

The dead spirits roared and charged forward. They fought fiercely to secure the space that had opened up.

The magician king looked at the army of the dead that had appeared in the rear. He just nodded lightly, instead of getting bewildered.

He had expected this much when he heard that Hrumbak was defeated, and the army of the dead was as he had expected. They were a lot, simply looking at their numbers, but even so they couldn't be compared to the evil spirits. In addition, the army of the dead was at a level that could barely be compared to the warriors of Midgard. There was nothing to fear at all.

The magician king gave some orders with a gesture of his hand and looked at Valhalla once again but it only for a moment.

“For Asgard and the nine realms!”

It wasn't the voice of Galeon leading the army of the dead.

Ratatoskr passed through an invisible branch of the world tree and opened up a door. A new army appeared right next to the place where the army of the dead had appeared from.

They were the dwarves of Nidavelir. Totally armed, they hit their drums and charged.

They were small in number' about 10,000, which was really few compared to the army of the dead.

But it wasn't the end.

A rain of arrows smothered the charge of the dwarves.

“For Asgard and the nine realms!”

Arianmina of the Kali family, who stood on the battlefield while representing the association of the families of Svartalfheim, whispered in a low voice. The fairies of light that came from Alfheim stood next to her and hit their chests.

Elementals charged from between the rain of arrows. They were the familiars of the light fairies.

Nidavellir, Svartalfheim and Alfheim.

But that wasn't all. There was another army that had come from a far place through the lake of fog that Freya had given up on and the magician king had cut off.

The ones that stood at the front were warriors riding on unicorns, and behind them were warriors riding on rhinos.

The Captain guard of Vanaheim, Hador, exclaimed. The army composed by Gods opened up a new path with their valor.

The magician king didn't become bewildered. He tried not to, and regained his normal composure by breathing deeply once. He then made a judgement.

The big picture didn't change that greatly.

The ones that he had thought wouldn't be able to gather in one place were gathered but they wouldn't be able to change the situation with them alone. Excluding the army of the dead, they were only a sheaf of straw that barely amounted to 10,000 or 20,000.

The giant of Night, Avalt. and the giant of Sea. Grund, each commanded a part of the force. They tried to sweep down the forces that appeared in the rear.

But it was impossible.

It was because there was still another force remaining. A group that had just arrived!

“Valhalla!”

They weren't the fairies.

Nor the Gods.

And also not the dead.

They were people that were alive.

The warriors of Midgard!

The tens of thousands of warriors followed at the back of the dwarves. At the front of them was someone that had ascended to heaven in the day that the Great War occurred but was unable to enter Valhalla by a hair's breadth. The princess of Kataron, Helga,

stood with the Valkyrie that had tried to ascend to heaven on that day and roared.

The existences that belonged to Asgard could descend to Midgard.

So was the opposite not possible? Who said so?

The magician king felt dizzy.

It was a situation he couldn't understand.

He could understand the army of the dead and the Vanir. But even if he tried to concede and understand how the dwarves, dark fairies and light fairies came to this place, he would need to try a hundred times; however, it was utterly impossible to do so with the warriors of Midgard.

The humans of Midgard were split in groups of ten and a hundred and were baring their swords at each other. It was impossible to gather them to one union and make them fight together.

"It's not impossible," Loki, who was hanging on the walls of the fortress, said. He couldn't even open his eyes properly, as his magical power had been squeezed out by the magician king, but he still spoke with his thin voice and smiled.

"You should also know the one that made this possible."

The magician king gritted his teeth. He glared at the army that had appeared at the rear and yelled in indignation.

"Odin!"

The king of Gods.

The one who could lead the warriors of various worlds. The one who could gather the warriors of Midgard that had been fighting among themselves and raising feuds in one.

"This is the battle of a king."

Standing at the front and fighting wasn't the only battle a king could do.

A king was someone that led. Someone that gathered existences that would otherwise be weak alone but strong when they were together.

Odin was sitting on the head of Ratatoskr in a curled-up position. He then waved his hand once again instead of going out to fight directly. This was the moment that the trump card should appear.

Balcazar, which was charging towards Scathach, turned to look back unconsciously. It was because a shadow had been cast over its head.

A place higher than the sky had been taken over by the monsters.

A strong gale occurred and that alone made the hundreds of flying evil spirits dizzy, and they crashed down.

It was an existence bigger than the frost black dragon.

The real supreme ruler of the sky.

"Damned bastards," the king of birds, Hraesvelg, snorted and said. Countless predatory birds flew behind his huge original body and attacked the heads of the evil spirits as if they were snatching their prey.

And right at that moment...

...That moment, the gale Hraesvelg created scattered Balcazar's ice breath.

Idun felt her chest beat.

Heda clenched her chest roughly.

Idun saw it.

Heda felt it.

What was connected to them.

That they were becoming one.

[Saga: Idun's Warrior]

It was coming from farther than the army of the dead. It was surging up from between the hundreds of warriors and dozens of Valkyries.

The black dragon Nidhogg.

But it wasn't alone.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Valkyrie Meet Him]

[Saga: The Master of Flames]

[Saga: The Master of Frost]

Another black dragon roared.

Two white frost dragons and one red dragon held their icy and fiery breaths in their mouths.

Five dragons.

It was an overwhelming existence that couldn't be looked away from.

Someone pulled his sword from the head of those dragons, no, from the army of dragons.

He glared at the army of the giants and ordered, "Kill them."

Short words.

The dragons obeyed his words and at the same time opened their mouths.

Five streaks of light.

Five flashes.

That was the authority of a king.

The symbol of strength that only real dragons could use.

Dragon breath.

It swept through the battlefield and opened up a path forcefully.

The five dragons fluttered their wings simultaneously and no one could dare to block their path. They just stared dumbfoundedly.

Heda breathed roughly and Idun looked at the one that was approaching while crying, “It wasn’t a prince riding on a white horse but a black dragon, huh!”

Freya laughed and the five dragons turned after stopping in front of the fortress. They put the fortress behind them and faced the army of the giants.

There were still a lot of enemies.

They overwhelmed Valhalla’s forces.

But Ragnar laughed out loud. He could only do that.

The one standing on the head of the black dragon raised his sword and activated another one of his sagas.

Another legend that obtained its form and shape as it became known by many and has surpassed the level of mystic!

[Legendary ranked saga: The Goddess of Youth Smiles Below the Golden Apple Tree]

The most beautiful Goddess.

And the most gentle Goddess.

There is fortune to the one that believes!

An illusion of a huge golden apple tree surged up. The illusion, which was even bigger than the black dragon, grabbed the attention of everyone on the battlefield.

The warriors of Valhalla could feel themselves getting heated up. Strength and courage surged up from deep inside their chests.

On the other hand, the evil spirits felt haunted. The holy power of the golden apple tree took away their strength and courage.

And right at that moment...

The princess of Kataron Helga flushed. She yelled out loud with

the emotions she couldn't contain.

“Idun's warrior!”

It was the start. The battlefield started to shake once again.

The warriors of Valhalla held their tribute and praise and the evil spirits yelled in fear and rage.

Idun's warrior.

The commander of Idun.

“Idun, Heda.”

For the peace of his family – no, of the legion.

Tae Ho whispered in a low voice. He felt Idun and Heda, who had been connected into one and gripped Caliburn.

He glared at the army of the magician king.

< Episode 43 – Reunited (4) > End

Episode 44/Chapter 1: The Great War (1)

While Tae Ho was executing the guerrilla tactic in Asgard, Odin roamed the several small realms that were inside of Asgard.

Svartalfheim, Nidavellir and Alfheim.

The fairies of the three worlds answered to Odin's call.

Odin kept sending away his crows. He transmitted his voice to the Vanir, who were going to Asgard through a long roundabout path, and also to Hraesvelg's people, waiting on the highest branch.

The most important thing was getting the time right.

It was important to gather forces before the seal of Valhalla broke but there couldn't be a mistake in the infiltration of the forces.

What they were aiming for was the moment after the seal broke.

The forces waiting in Valhalla weren't enough.

The forces Odin gathered from the small realms also weren't enough.

They had to gather to become one. They had to make a force that could face even the great army of the magician king. They couldn't be defeated one by one.

Odin, who manifested in Midgard, called and gathered the kings of the humans as the king of Gods.

The dwarf king Vanter, Arianmina the representative of the alliance of the dark fairies and Talles, the diplomat of the light fairies, accompanied Odin.

The king of the humans didn't doubt Odin's words.

They were in a world that knew that the warriors of Valhalla existed. In addition, they had already experienced the invasion of the giants and evil spirits.

Gods and Valhalla existed and now that the giants were threatening Asgard, they didn't hide their forces. They swore that they would lend their strength to Odin.

The forces gathered in Midgard and Niflheim, and the crows flew back to Odin and transmitted the news; the performance of Idun's warrior, the state of the barrier and the time left until it broke down.

Odin sat on the head of Ratatsork and glared at the sky of Midgard with his only eye.

The thing only Odin could do.

The thing that could be done only because it was him.

And the time had finally come.

Right before the seal of Valhalla collapsed...

When Freya stood in front of the barrier while determining herself to die...

Odin gave the order.

And the doors of the Great barrier opened up.

&

The dwarves of Nidavellir were small creatures.

However, they had never-tiring stamina, extraordinary manual dexterity and a tough mental power, like the tendon of a cow that was hard as steel.

The dwarves held axes or hammers in one hand and shields in the other and advanced as a solid wall. Part of the wall broke down because of the attack of the evil spirits but still, the entire wall never broke down.

The hammer of a cow-headed monster smashed the top of the shield of the dwarf Randor. He pulled his arm and raised his shield solidly at the moment of the attack but it wasn't enough. Randor's

arm was twisted at a weird angle and he was sent flying away.

However, the cow-headed monster wasn't safe either. The moment Randor was sent flying away, the other dwarves attacked the knees and thighs of the monster with their hammers and axes.

The dark fairy, Celine, notched her bow and the arrow of darkness that flew from her fingers pierced the eye of the cow-headed monster.

The monster let out a howl and collapsed and Celine could feel her chest beat. The accomplishment of having hit her target and the fact that she was standing on the battlefield made her excited. That was why she couldn't see her surroundings.

An arrow came flying towards her from a distance. It was a trajectory that would have certainly pierced through her long slender neck.

But fortunately, such a thing didn't happen. The light fairy, Lulu, called her wind elemental and sent the arrow flying away.

Celine looked at the arrow that was stuck in the ground and turned to look at Lulu. Celine was a beauty that gave the impression of a really mature woman with her long white braided hair. On the other hand, Lulu looked like a kid with her short hair.

Their races were different and even their temperaments were different. If it wasn't for this place today, they would have never met each other in their entire lives and even if they did, it was a fate that would have passed.

But they turned to look at each other. Lulu laughed first and Celine also did the same. The dark fairy expressed her thanks with a silent bow and glared at the battlefield once again. She notched her bowstring once again, to help the charging dwarves.

The dead spirits charged.

They had already lost their lives once. They didn't have a mortal body, like the warriors of Valhalla and few of them had the honor

of a warrior.

But they still charged forward. It wasn't because Hela had used an evil conjuring and manipulated their minds and also not because they had the huge consciousness of fighting for Asgard and the nine realms like the warriors of Valhalla.

Midgard was their hometown.

Their families and friends were still in this place.

The majority of the army of the dead weren't warriors. Even the ones that were warriors were the ones that couldn't enter Valhalla.

But it didn't matter. Their feeling of wanting to protect it was similar.

The dead spirits were swept away and got stepped on by the giants. The ones that were already dead experienced death once again.

The warriors of Midgard cried out to Valhalla. Advancing and retreating; they didn't turn back in a battlefield in which only the front and the back existed. They just looked forward and advanced and shared the same place with the ones that were already dead and with the ones that lived in the same time, although in a different place.

The princess of Kataron, Helga, roared at the front. Her body had become messy because of the blood and flesh of the evil spirits and monsters but she didn't mind it one bit.

She could see a golden apple tree from far away. Just looking at it gave her strength.

The battle cry of the warriors was heard from next to her. They didn't step back, even though they were in a place where death spread like fire.

"For Asgard and the nine realms!" Helga yelled with the voice she managed to squeeze out.

The Valkyrie that was next to her got her chest pierced by the spear that an evil spirit thrust forward. Helga didn't scream and the same went for the Valkyrie. Rather, she grabbed the spear to immobilize her opponent.

The Valkyrie laughed with her lips, which were dripping blood. She released her magic power and Helga swung her sword and cut off the head of the evil spirit.

"March forward," the Valkyrie said.

She pulled out the spear and used recovery magic on herself. A water elemental, that came flying from somewhere, treated her injury.

Helga followed the order of the Valkyrie. She took one more step, instead of looking back...

...Towards Valhalla.

Helga swung her sword one more time.

&

Odin looked at the battlefield and the magician king also did the same.

It was a battlefield where hundreds of thousands clashed. A great number of deceased appeared the moment the two sides clashed.

But the two kings weren't planning to stop, even a little.

The giants started to move earnestly as the magician king gave the order. They crossed the battlefield to crush down the army of the dead.

Freya, who was using all kinds of magic from the highest tower of Valhalla, didn't miss the changes in the battlefield. She looked at the place Ragnar was at and he understood her meaning even before she used message magic. The Viking king, who received the supreme command over the warriors of Valhalla, made a decision.

"Open the gates! Join with the brothers that are outside of

Valhalla!”

They had to join with the forces that were fighting at different places.

Going out only with the warriors of Valhalla was a crazy thing but the story changed if they could join with the alliance Odin had brought.

They wouldn't just focus on defending the fortress by being stuck in it. They would join their forces and face the army of the giants.

Thirty of the 540 doors of the fortress opened up and the Steel warriors charged forward from all of those doors.

“Val-! -ha! -lla!”

They were warriors that couldn't use their sagas anymore but they still had their steel bodies, and also the soul of a warrior that didn't fall behind to their solid body.

The front broke down and crumbled. There was no next time for the Steel warriors that had already died once but they didn't feel fear or regret. They just ran while looking forward and didn't cower at all in front of the great army of the evil spirits.

“Go, go, go! Warriors of Valhalla!” Freya yelled with all her strength. It was actually close to a howl and actually, she was even crying.

[Saga: Son of a God]

Bracky released his power of a God. Siri, who was next to him, transformed into a wolf Goddess and subsequently pulled the trigger of her crossbow.

The arrows of light became a rain and annihilated the enemies in front of them. At that moment, Bracky charged and joined with the Steel warriors.

A change occurred in the flow of the battle. The warriors that had gotten out of Valhalla started to face the giants and the

alliance of the small worlds turned to the sides and set up a line.

And right at that moment...

No, a bit earlier than that...

Tae Ho took a deep breath. He could feel Idun and Heda. He heard her voices.

‘My warrior Tae Ho.’

‘My warrior Tae Ho.’

Idun repeated the same words. He could feel a corner of his chest become sour at her crying voice.

‘Hello once again?’

Heda spoke while crying. Tae Ho was curious as to how he could hear Heda’s voice but then understood. It was because he had noticed it somewhat it from before.

“Idun, Heda. Heda, Idun,” he whispered playfully one more time and Idun and Heda cried while laughing.

“Only calling the two of them,” Nidhogg pouted and mumbled in a low voice. Adenmaha glanced sideways, as she was feeling the same.

Tae Ho felt a bit embarrassed but it wasn’t the time to ponder about these things.

Idun gave strength to Tae Ho and the golden apple tree amplified Idun’s divine power.

Tae Ho ordered with the abundant feeling. The five dragons employed their right as kings and erased the monsters that were running towards him.

“For Asgard and the nine realms!”

Tae Ho hit his chest twice. He then moved to the heart room of the black dragon and placed his hands on the keyboard and mouse. He embraced Nidhogg and ordered, “Roll.”

It was the most effective strategy that had already been proved before.

“Yes! I will roll!” Nidhogg answered brightly, and at that moment, Nidhogg and the fake black dragon threw themselves to the ground.

An overwhelming result was made as the two of them rolled together.

The evil spirits that were inside a radius of 400 meters were swept down by the black catastrophe without even being able to flee. It seemed like a shower of hail had fallen down on the battlefield.

In addition, it didn't end with only that.

Nidhogg clenched her chest. She blinked with a perplexed face and didn't know what to do.

“Tae Ho master, I feel weird. A corner of my heart keeps beating. I feel really weird.”

Tae Ho hurriedly used ‘The One That Controls Dragons’ and checked on her state and then laughed. He understood why her heart was beating that way and why she was acting like that.

“Idun's Valkyrie.”

Nidhogg wasn't a seed of destruction that was only stuck in the roots of the world tree. She was a black dragon and at the same time, a Valkyrie of Valhalla.

Tae Ho lead her. Nidhogg gulped saliva down a dry throat and followed Tae Ho's order.

[Saga: Rolling Catastrophe]

Nidhogg's saga.

Something everyone in the battlefield could only remember.

A change had occurred in the roll of the black dragon. The earth

had started to boom with the beat she was rolling. It wasn't simply because of the weight of the black dragon. A strong shockwave had spread through the ground and a dragon's fear was transmitted.

The poison had also changed. It spread to the places the rolling disaster didn't reach, as if it had become a living being, and exterminated the enemies.

Adenmaha, the fake Adenmaha and Rolo guarded the black dragon from the sky.

"Indeed, the fated enemy of fire," Hraesvelg said while standing at the highest place of the battlefield.

Actually, it was unsightly to look at, but the story changed when the scale was that big. The dragon roll had already reached the level of being a wonder.

Hraesvelg laughed and looked at another place. He looked at the black frost dragon Balcazar, which had pulled back but was preparing to charge once again, and also at the monsters and giants charging towards the dragon from the ground.

He didn't give her a warning or help her. It was because there was no need to do so.

The warrior Gods that were in Valhalla moved.

The messenger God, Heimdall and the God of the Sea, Njord.

The two Gods went ahead of the black dragon and they faced the monsters and giants with their divine power. The warriors and Valkyries followed their backs.

It was a disaster.

Just looking at the number of forces, the giants were more numerous but rather, the giants were the ones that were getting pushed back.

The magician king had to gulp down his rage. He gave an order instead of losing his mind and charged towards the battlefield.

The giant kings moved to face the black dragons and battle Gods. The evil spirits widened their ranks to overwhelm their enemies with numbers.

The evil spirits weren't the only ones that were plummeting.

The warriors of Valhalla and Valkyries were also dying and the Steel warriors were breaking apart and crumbling.

Crush down all the dwarves. Tear apart the fairies.

Balazar charged towards Hraesvelg from the sky. The flying-type monsters and Valkyries crashed down from the sky.

It was a nasty war of attrition.

...A war where you killed and got killed.

The scale moved. The scale, which had a tight balance started to lean towards the side of the giants little by little.

But Odin didn't lose his composure.

The giant king, who was thinking only of offense, started to think of pulling back at one point.

The reason for that was simple.

Tae Ho saw it from inside the black dragon, which had stopped rolling.

Bracky and Siri also stopped fighting and looked into the distance.

From the east of Valhalla, another army was approaching.

As soon as they had reached Asgard, they crossed the space with their martial arts and were now advancing forward with the clouds they were riding on.

"Go, Flying Nimbus, with all your strength! The monkey king has entrusted this battle to me," the one at the front said.

Witacheon. (TL: There's no actual translation for this name or I couldn't find it. I will just leave a description here took from

korean wikipedia. He's one of the buddhist heavenly Gods. Originally the Indian God of war. His native Sanskrit name is Skanda is derived from Iskandar with the name the king Alexandros gave him.)

The God of Speed who crossed the wind.

One of the twelve protectors of the Temple!

The magician king glared at the advancing golden cloud and let out a roar and Cuchulainn roared as well.

It had been a hundred years since the Great War.

The Temple hadn't turned its back on Asgard.

< Episode 44 – The Great War (1) > End

Episode 44/Chapter 2: The Great War (2)

Asgard was currently confronting the giants of Jotunheim.

Olympus was fighting against the titans of Tartarus.

The Temple was in the same situation. The three worlds which were at the front lines were currently in a continual war against the ones hoping for the destruction of the world.

The sun archipelago.

It was the base of the ones hoping to destroy the world and the enemy of the Temple. The Temple was still in a fierce struggle against them.

The elders of the Temple showed disapproval when Valkyrie Kaldea notified them of the urgency of Asgard. It was because they didn't have the leisure to dispatch their forces to another place when they were also in a war. In addition, they had already assisted them once in the Great War.

The Temple had suffered considerable losses in the Great war. Only half of the ones that had gone to the battlefield had returned alive.

But they were told that they should face those losses once again?

Just what did Asgard do for them the in the past hundred years?

However, there were more people that wanted to assist them earnestly than those showing disapproval.

The Sword King of the Heavens, who was the representative of the martial artists, claimed that they would dispatch forces immediately. He, who had also participated in the Great war, organized the situation to the ones claiming that it wasn't of benefit to them with one sentence.

“That is harmony.”

If they considered whether they should help or not by pointing

out the gains and losses, that wasn't harmony anymore. It was only business logic.

The divine warrior, who was the strongest among the martial artists of the Temple, backed up the Sword King. He didn't hold what the martial artists usually named the word of harmony in his mouth. What he spoke about was a much simpler and easier to understand logic.

“You should keep justice.”

The Temple and Asgard were allies, because they were from the same side.

The Battle King, who was ranked at the top even among the Twelve Protectors of the Temple. Son Wukong laughed at that claim. He giggled and tried to support them.

“Let's help them. That Palgye completely fell for the Valkyrie that told of us the urgency. Well, it happens all the time.”

“Hey hyung-nim, why are you saying that here?”

Juh Palgye flushed and protested but Son Wukong just picked his ear.

Sha Wujing, who was behind the two of them, shook his head and meanwhile Son Wukong told the elders of the Temple that they should help once again. It wasn't only because of Juh Palgye and also not because of the military way of thinking that they should help their allies.

One world was at the verge of destruction.

Then, wasn't it obvious for beings wanting to maintain the world, no, as humans to help them?

As most of the martial artists that had actually fought said that they should help them, the elders that were against it could only place their hopes on the strongest people of the Temple.

But they also expressed the same thing as the martial artists.

“We can’t send a lot of forces in this instant, however we will send strong people.”

The Captain of the Pure Ones, Yuanshi Tianzun, spoke to Kaldea while representing everyone. One of the Twelve protectors, Witacheon, was selected to be the one that would lead the troops and the strongest followers of the Sword King and Battle King stepped up to help Witacheon.

In addition, Yuanshi Tianzun provided them with giants that possessed divine power and Gods that possessed their own thrones.

Son Wukong also didn’t stay still, as he was the one that had claimed the dispatchment of reinforcements earnestly. He entrusted his most treasured companion, the Flying Nimbus, to Witacheon.

“You don’t have anything for us, Xi Wangmu?” asked Son Wukong with a humorous expression.

Xi Wangmu laughed as Son Wukong spoke and then lightly clapped her hands.

The celestial maids stepped to the front and then placed five celestial peaches on the floor.

It could be said that Xi Wangmu, who was the commander of the celestial maidens and the administrator of the celestial peaches, had the same role as Freya in Asgard.

Son Wukong became amazed at the generosity of Xi Wangmu and then turned to look at Juh Palgye and requested, “It’s a precious object. Don’t eat it all in the path.”

“Ata, Hyung-nim. Why are you like this? And are you one to speak? Did you already forget who was the one that cleared up all the peaches before at a moment’s notice?” Juh Palgye grumbled.

He used quite a serious speech in front of others but his words became rough when speaking with Son Wukong.

“If you wish, you can stay here and rest. You should be really exhausted after having come a rough and long path.”

Yuanshi Tianzun spoke gently to Kaldea, but she declined politely. She thanked the good will of the Temple deeply and answered that she would return with the reinforcements.

The day after was the day of the dispatchment.

The martial artists who hadn't gone out to the front lines gathered in one spot and sent off the reinforcements heading to Asgard.

“For Asgard and the nine realms!” Yuanshi Tianzun said, hitting his chest twice

Kaldea became moved at the best of goodwill that one of the most influential people sent. Her eyes reddened and she answered with the etiquette of the Temple.

“Let the light of the Temple be eternal.”

Time passed.

The reinforcements of the Temple, which had advanced day and night, finally reached a place they could see the battlefield.

Witacheon, the God of Speed, comforted the warriors of the Temple. Kaldea looked at Valhalla, which could be seen from far away, and the warriors of the various small worlds that had gathered and shed tears of inspiration.

But they weren't alone.

Just like the reinforcements of the Temple saw Valhalla and the Temple, the ones standing on the battlefield also saw them. They sensed that they were approaching.

The magician king made a quick judgement. He made a bold decision and the giant kings didn't resist his order. Hrumbak and the others who could stay next to the magician king had already died or were in another place.

“Hurry up before the guys of the Temple arrive. Deal them a good blow and create some distance.”

Karasipha, who was one of the giant kings and specialized in necromancy and handling the dead, made the dead arise. At the same time, the entire army of the giants started to move, as if it was a single living being.

The front lines itself was really wide as it was a battlefield where hundreds of thousands fought at the same time.

The giants concentrated their power on one point and attacked the alliance of the small worlds that were at their side.

On top of that, it wasn't a simple attack. The evil spirits charged solely to enter the enemy ranks and self detonated. An empty space could only be formed as thousands of evil spirits exploded simultaneously.

The intention of the magician king was to pull back their forces.

He couldn't know what result would appear with the warriors of Valhalla that were riding on the momentum and on top of that, the warriors of the Temple had joined the battle.

In addition, they couldn't know exactly how big the reinforcements of the Temple were. If a huge army was mobilized, contrary of their expectations they would lose disastrously.

He had to call Tauchi and the other giant kings, who had gone outside. He had to first retrieve their forces to secure their survival and come up with a plan to defeat Odin.

The army of the frost giant king, Harmarti, was holding back Thor's army.

But of course, the magician king also couldn't use the army of the frost giant king freely because of that. Perhaps, he had made it so that the two armies couldn't do anything.

He would deal a big blow and open the gap and then calmly

retreat.

Odin realized what the magician king was thinking and he was planning to play into his palm for now.

They were riding on the momentum but their damages were also bigger than expected.

The warriors of Valhalla were brave but they still lacked the ability to fight in a battlefield of Gods.

“We will fight with the Temple.”

They would retrieve their forces and devise a plan for the next time they joined forces.

In the first place, it was a huge-scale battle in which hundreds of thousands fought.. The two sides didn't think that the war would end in one day.

The magician king and Odin didn't share a word but they agreed with each other. The magician king made his army retreat and Odin didn't chase him rashly. Hraesvelg, who was looking down at the battlefield, understood Odin's thoughts because he was also a king. He didn't chase the fleeing Balcazar.

When the reinforcements from the Temple arrived was when the battle had actually ended.

Victory and defeat also were decided naturally.

The ones that were on the offensive fell back.

This meant that the ones that were on the defensive had won the battle.

Odin, who was sitting on Ratatoskr's forehead, stood up. He blew the horn trumpet and claimed their victory while the warriors were looking at him.

The magician king granted the victory to Odin with the price of falling back. He sent a small compliment to the warriors of Valhalla cheering in victory as an enemy who hated them.

“Odin! Odin!”

“King of Gods!”

The warriors of Valhalla yelled with all their strength. Part of them called out Heimdall’s and Njord’s names and there were also some Valkyries yelling out Freya’s name.

They were Gods of a high ranking, even among the Gods of Asgard. That’s why it should have ended with just their names.

But a new voice was heard and that made everyone yell in a chorus.

“For Idun!”

“For Idun’s warrior!”

Tae Ho removed ‘The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him’ and stood on the head of the black dragon with Nidhogg. Adenmaha and Rolo returned to their original appearances and stood by his side.

Tae Ho answered to the cheers of the warriors. He didn’t miss the moment, as expected of the promoter of the legion, and made a golden apple tree illusion.

The warriors of Valhalla, who were already accustomed to it became amazed one more time, and the warriors of the Temple opened their eyes roundly.

Tae Ho laughed and hit his chest twice to express the etiquette and then looked at the army of the magician king, which was retreating. He also looked at the group of the Temple that was coming towards him.

And then he turned once again. He looked at the castle of Valhalla.

It was a really huge wall.

There was a group that numbered more than ten thousand in those walls and it was really disorderly as males and females were

mixed in it.

But he could still find her in one glance.

He could feel that their eyes had met even though they were far away.

Idun, who had taken off her veil showed her golden eyes.

Heda, who wore a bright smile.

They hadn't won the war yet. Rather, it could be said that it had just started.

But Tae Ho forgot about the war in that moment. He thought of the woman that had bolstered him all this time. She was the Goddess who was still transmitting strength to him through his saga.

The black dragon fluttered its wings and flew up.

Idun suppressed her excitement and waited for Tae Ho but Heda couldn't endure it anymore and flew up to the sky. It was only for a moment but she transformed into a beautiful swan and closed the distance with Tae Ho.

They finally faced each other. They didn't need any more words.

The two of them embraced each other and shared a passionate kiss. Part of the warriors that were cheering victory started to yell. Bracky laughed and initiated a chant.

“It's! A! Meeting!”

It was an absurd sound but the ones that understood the legend of Idun's warrior agreed to it. Siri also yelled out loud. The princess of Kataron, Helga, yelled with a voice mixed with wonder, regret and admiration. Rasgrid, Reginleif, Gandur, Ingrid and even Ragnar and Merlin yelled together.

“It's! A! Meeting!”

“It's! A! Meeting!”

The entirety of Valhalla shook. Their voices became one and shook the sky and ground. The warriors of Valhalla were people that went to the end when the atmosphere was good.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

It had ranked up by one stage.

‘The Warrior That Had a Valkyrie Meet Him’ took a new shape.

Heda sensed that the saga strengthened and opened her eyes roundly.

Tae Ho embraced Heda one more time. He gave her a fiercer kiss, as he couldn’t let her go.

Heda didn’t reject it.

Rather, she acted more aggressively.

&

“They are too much, really.”

< Episode 44 – The Great War (2) > End

Episode 44/Chapter 3: The Great War (3)

“They really are too much.”

“Right, right. Tae Ho master is too much.”

Adenmaha spoke with cold eyes and Nidhogg with a teary face.

Tae Ho, who was on the head of the black dragon and in front of two dragons – perhaps two Goddesses, was still sharing a passionate kiss.

The warriors that were cheering for them at the start had now turned away and were taking care of their own business and some of them said, ‘they are still going at it?’

Gandur, who had giggled and enjoyed the view, now wore an awkward expression. Bracky, who was the first to set the atmosphere, turned to look at Siri and she frowned at his expectant expression. She made a light gesture with her chin and said while looking at him with eyes that only the two of them understood, ‘Not now.’

There were too many people near them. In addition, the timing was completely off. They didn’t know if it was just when Tae Ho and Heda had started to kiss, so to say, when they first felt the happiness of having won, but it was too late now.

The warriors and shield maidens and even the Valkyries that had shared kisses and hugs because of the happiness were now taking care of the battlefield with embarrassed faces.

Adenmaha’s eyes became close to the absolute zero and when Nidhogg was about to start crying, Tae Ho’s and Heda’s blessing ended. A superior ranked Valhalla warrior and a representative Valkyrie wouldn’t be out of breath in normal battles, but now they could only pant because they couldn’t breathe properly.

Heda bit her lower lip, embarrassed and Tae Ho felt Heda to be too lovely and felt the urge to kiss her once again.

However, he held himself back, because they had shared a kiss for close to almost twenty minutes. Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and let an absent minded voice flow in his mind.

‘How great, too great. How are you able to do that?’

‘I saved it for myself. It was also like this before... so to say, that day.’

Another voice interrupted.

It was none other than Idun.

They knew even without any explanation of the day Idun was speaking about.

...The day of the announcement that Tae Ho got promoted to the superior rank; when Heda gave Tae Ho the best blessing in front of everyone.

‘That really was to show it to others?’

It was to show Rasgrid and the other Valkyries, ‘don’t look at him, he’s mine. So don’t even touch him.’

No one said anything but everyone thought of the same thing. Heda’s red face became even redder and she explained hurriedly, “Ah, that’s not the case. It’s not like that.”

There was no logic behind it. She was just forcing herself to say it and because of that, Idun’s calm voice suppressed Heda’s useless resistance.

‘It is like that.’

She also spoke without logic but had an incredible persuasiveness behind it.

It was because she had done the same this time. She used the kiss, which had continued for twenty minutes, so that everyone engraved it thoroughly in their heads, to the point they disliked it.

Heda bit her lower lip once again and gritted her teeth. She spoke

sharply, as she couldn't endure it anymore.

“Then, you are also the same, Idun.”

‘I don't know what you are talking about,’ Idun countered. Heda's eyes became sharper.

“Hmph, so you are going to come out like that, huh? Then Tae Ho is mine now. He's Heda's warrior. He will give up on being Idun's warrior.”

‘W, we weren't talking about that!’

‘What is this chaos and destruction? This situation that makes others that are watching burn with rage?’

Cuchulainn mumbled in a reverent voice while Heda and Idun were arguing with each other.

Tae Ho felt that he should get the situation under control. It was because he had to protect the peace of his family – no, the legion.

“Uh, um... Heda? Idun-nim?”

He called them both for now. Heda raised her head and looked at Tae Ho and he realized...

“Idun-nim?”

“So you can differentiate!”

‘Idun!’

Idun smiled with a bright face and this time, Heda's voice rang in her head. It seemed as if the rights over their body had passed from Heda to Idun.

‘My comprehension isn't able to catch up...’ Cuchulainn spoke with a suffering expression.

Tae Ho also wanted to nod but he was in a different situation from Cuchulainn. It was because Tae Ho was the involved party compared to Cuchulainn, who was a spectator.

He spoke carefully to Idun, whom he had recognized by the really

lovely face that she wore.

“Uh... We have lots of things to talk about, right?”

“That’s right. And it seems like we also have to listen about her; and there are things you should explain.”

Idun’s eyes became sharp. Her golden eyes, which were usually covered with a veil, were a bit different to Heda’s. It was a very slight difference but it had more dignity and fierceness.

Nidhogg was where Idun’s eyes were looking. She had approached Tae Ho and was grabbing at his clothes while mumbling in a low voice.

“She’s certainly strong. Too strong,” she said.

She felt like she had been smashed to pieces.

Idun’s eyes weren’t only looking at Nidhogg.

It was because she wasn’t the only dragon and Goddess there.

Adenmaha, who had approached at some point, grabbed the other part of Tae Ho’s sleeve.

&

The King of Gods, Odin went to the place the throne for the king was at.

Hlidskjalf.

The throne of the Gods, on which only its king and his proxy could sit.

Odin, who had protected that seat for a long time, sat on the throne with accustomed movements. He then buried his body in it while curling down and then raised his head while closing his eyes with a modest face.

A sharp sound was heard. Freya breathed hard after slapping Odin’s cheek while gritting her teeth.

Odin took a deep breath and opened his only eye to look at Freya.

“You can hit me more if you wish.”

“Of course! Do you think I won’t be able to if you speak like that?!”

Freya really didn’t stop. She kept slapping Odin’s cheek several more times.

“Really! Really! Really!”

If he was leaving he should have told her something!

And told her something if he had set up a plan like that!

How was she the mistress of Asgard? How was she the commander of the Valkyries and landlady of Valhalla?!

She had been tricked for more than a hundred years.

No matter the intention, Odin had hidden things from her for a hundred years.

Why hadn’t he told her?

Why did he make her curse Loki for that long?

She knew the reason. There was no way that she would miss the reason, as she was wise.

But her emotions had exploded. The violent thoughts were pressing down on her consciousness.

Freya cried. She cried and hit Odin. In the end, she buried her head in his chest and then burst into tears.

It was thanks for being alive.

For having returned.

Because Freyr hadn’t returned.

His foolish brother had left his only sister alone.

Odin embraced Freya. He patted her back and soothed her.

“I’m sorry.”

“If you know, you should do things properly.”

Freya pouted and pushed Odin away. With a messy face, she took a breath and then asked, “Um... are you okay?”

“I am. Probably.”

“If you are, you should just say so. What is the probably? That’s so petty.”

Freya grumbled as she healed Odin’s wounds with recovery magic. It was because his cheek was swollen, as she had hit him so hard and repeatedly.

Following that, Freya also used recovery magic on herself. She didn’t get hit but her eyes were red and swollen for having cried too much.

Odin regained his normal self. Freya, who had barely regained her composure, gave a short and sharp blessing to Odin.

“We can let them in now, right?”

“They must be waiting. Let’s hurry.”

Freya nodded. She rolled her fingers and sent a signal to a distant place and the Valkyries of Freya’s legion led the honored guests to the room of the king.

The first one that entered was Hador, who led the warriors of the Vanir.

Followed by that, the representative of the light fairies Farian, and the dark fairy, Arianmina, entered and then Gundor, the representative of Nidavellir, followed their back.

There were several representatives of Midgard, as it was separated in several parts. Seven human kings entered the throne room with very honored expressions.

The last one that entered was Hela.

The queen of the dead entered, escorted by the best warrior of

Niflheim, Galeon, and then sat in the seat that was below and at the right of Odin.

They were reinforcements from the small worlds inside of Asgard.

Freya expressed her thanks to them and Odin gave blessings towards them.

After a while, the last guest entered the room.

The one that came from outside of Asgard.

The other realm that hadn't turn their backs on Asgard.

Witacheon, one of the twelve protectors of the Temple, entered the room with majestic steps. He, who was famous for being the God of speed, wore white clothes that stuck to his body so his solid muscles and long legs were showing.

The dark fairy Arianmina admired Witacheon's dignified appearance and Freya smiled with her eyes.

Witacheon stood in front of Odin instead of sitting by his side. He then hit his chest twice and expressed etiquette.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

It was the Asgardian etiquette. Odin answered with the etiquette of the Temple.

“Let the light of the Temple be eternal,” Odin and Freya said. Witacheon was moved at the etiquette he received from the best God and the Goddess, who could be said were right below him.

He smiled faintly and delivered the letter of Yuanshi Tianzun.

&

Time flowed normally, as if the fierce battle had been a lie.

Night was as cold as always and was silent and dark.

The Steel warriors decided to look out themselves. It was because they didn't get exhausted, with their Steel bodies.

It was so that the warriors of Valhalla could rest overnight and could relieve their exhaustion.

It was the consideration of the Steel warriors, who were warriors of Valhalla even after dying.

Rasgrid walked on the walls of the fortress and consoled those warriors, and the Steel warriors thanked her.

Reginleif and the other Valkyries were encouraging the warriors inside the fortress.

They shared cups of alcohol and instilled them with the courage to fight once more.

The Valkyries were as exhausted as them and Reginleif had received quite a serious injury in the battle.

But she still smiled. Ingrid cared for the injuries of the warriors rather than herself.

They had won but the damages were great.

Countless warriors had become Steel warriors and thousands of Steel warriors had faced their real end.

There were also many injured and dead among the Valkyries.

The ones that fought in the sky suffered especially severe losses.

Hrist, of Hermod's legion, poured alcohol for the warriors of Midgard. She had lost many of her sisters that day but she showed neither despair nor sadness. She tried to smile, even if it was forced.

The legion that had faced the most damages were the Valkyries of Hermod's legion.

Part of it was because they had participated in the battle earnestly, regardless of the injuries and shame they had suffered from Tiachi but it was also because of the whereabouts of the Valkyries that had headed to the Olympus and were really far away.

Hrist let out a small sigh, unable to hide her exhaustion. Kaldea approached her at some point and hugged her to share their warmth. She made it so that she could rest at least for a moment.

In a deep place of Valhalla, Tae Ho was speaking with Idun.

There were many things the two of them had to explain and talk about. Nidhogg and Adenmaha weren't the only ones at Tae Ho's side; Ragnar, Merlin and Scathach were also there.

Tae Ho spoke for a long time and then looked in the direction of the giants.

He couldn't see their camp, because the night was so dark that even the moon was hiding. But he could feel them.

The ones wanting to destroy the world.

The ones wanting to destroy Asgard.

They were at that place and were still releasing their evil aura in that moment.

The night deepened.

Then morning was approaching.

The real battle was just starting now.

< Episode 44 – The Great War (3) > End

Episode 44/Chapter 4: The Great War (4)

The warrior that woke up the first when morning came could sense it.

The Steel warrior that was glaring at the battlefield covered with fog understood.

It was something they knew, even without saying it and they were able to feel it because they were opposed to each other.

The battle would start soon.

A big fight would take place today.

It was the same as when Odin accepted the magician king's choice to retreat when the reinforcements from the Temple arrived.

They understood what the other side was going to do.

It was a formation of a weird trustworthy relationship.

Morning was bright. The giants and the monsters led the vanguard and pushed forward to Valhalla.

The forces of Valhalla, including the alliance of the small worlds and the reinforcements of the Temple, stepped forward to face that army. It was a simple clash of strengths, which was faced from the front.

The sky and earth became covered with blood and death.

The warriors of Midgard called out to Valhalla and died.

The nameless evil spirits got their heads crushed while climbing the walls of the fortress and died.

Rains of arrows fell down from the sky.

The monsters howled and the giants roared. All kinds of strong magic emitted their own light from several places on the battlefield.

The battle continued in an agreed silence.

The army of the giants repeatedly attacked and retreated and the army of Valhalla defended the fortress to the end.

And on the fifth day of the war...

Odin and the magician king played their cards once again.

It was a card they each knew the other would one day play but regardless of that, it was the only card they could put in play.

The magician king and Odin looked at different places of the map.

It was the place at which the God of fire and lies Loki was being held.

&

The magician king didn't kill Loki, even though he knew that he had betrayed him.

It was in order to squeeze out the strong magical power he had.

But now that it was confirmed that Odin was alive, Loki didn't only serve as a living magical power storehouse; one more worth was added to him.

Then on the morning of the sixth day of the war.

The shape of the battlefield was the same as always. A group clashed within the walls and another group clashed outside the walls.

Countless beings burned down their lives in the excessively wide battlefield.

Led by Witacheon and Juh Palgye, the group of the Temple charged and opened up a parth and the five dragons controlled by Idun's warrior took the attention of everyone. Hraesvelg and the black frost dragon were in their sixth duel. The God of sea, Njord, and the watchman God, Heimdall, made their existences clear in

their own spots.

The magician king, who glared at another place of the battlefield from deep inside his camp, sat down in a curled position, similar to Odin. He looked at Valhalla, which was far away and at the countless others with his eyes and whispered in a low voice, “Odin will come. Probably today or at most tomorrow.”

He wasn’t talking to his underlings like the Giant of Night, Avalt, or the Giant of Sea, Grund. He was speaking to Loki, who was tied up with chains and hung on the walls.

Loki didn’t answer. He just maintained the forced faint smile he had worn since Odin and Idun’s warrior had returned to Valhalla.

“He is certainly a cruel and sly God of war but he won’t be able to throw you away.”

He had lost too many people in the Great War; and he hadn’t gotten over it at all.

If Loki had died instead, Odin would have been able to live more relaxed, rather than being sad.

But Loki was alive and Odin also knew of that by now.

He had realized it on the first or second day of the war.

The battlefield was as fierce as ever. The two sides were still killing each other. It seemed like they would be able to endure this for more than a month when they had expected at most fifteen days.

Loki wished for his king to be a colder person but he couldn’t deny the words of the magician king.

Odin would come; to rescue him, the man that had sacrificed himself for more than a hundred years.

The magician king stood up slowly from his place and stepped forward. If the hunter was next to the trap, no matter how dumb the prey was, he would obviously stop.

The magician king started to walk.

And Loki closed his eyes.

&

Juh Palgye, who was swinging his steel chains that had ten blades in them, felt a sense of incongruity at some point. He opened his thin eyes more sharply and glared at the battlefield.

One giant was hit by an attack from Witacheon, filled with his energy, and collapsed. The one that was surveilling him jumping over the collapsed giant lightly and charging like lightning again, became certain.

“He noticed.”

An uneasy and nasty smell was felt. It was certain that they had realized the strategy that even a minority of the side of the magician king knew of.

The voice of Juh Palgye was covered by the sounds heard from the battlefield but the Pagoda-Bearing Heavenly King Li Jing heard it clearly. He swung his pagoda, which shrunk when it was in his hands but got larger by tens of meters when he threw it, and answered with the same low voice.

“I still think he won’t stop.”

The reinforcements of the Temple didn’t save their forces. They were low in numbers but each one of them were strong, like they had promised and were well able to open a path in the battlefield.

Juh Palgye turned over a spacious piece of ground that was a few meters in front of him. He looked at the evil spirits that were sent flying and admitted, “They don’t know the exact moment but the two sides know of it, huh?”

Juh Palgye thought of the baduk he used to play with his master and brother. There were times that the two sides received the play of the other’s, even though they knew of their plays.

Juh Palgye ended his short introspection and nodded. He chose to do the same thing as always, instead of falling into deep thoughts.

“Let’s do what we were entrusted with well.”

He would open a path and sweep up the inferior beings of Jotunheim and make everyone focus on them. They would make others think that it was the same battlefield as yesterday.

Witacheon was charging from in front and the Pagoda-Bearing Heavenly King Li Jing agreed to Juh Palgye’s words.

&

Odin was advancing.

Freya was looking at his back from the distance.

She had obviously tried to stop him. She had cursed him and even slapped him.

But Odin didn’t stop and in the end Freya couldn’t stop Odin.

Freya gritted her teeth and glared at the battlefield.

They both knew of their cards but regardless of that they still saved it. They emptied out the most important place as if it was a play they had agreed on beforehand and dispatched their forces to weird places.

Heimdall and Njord stood in front of the fortress of Valhalla, rather than entering deep into the battlefield.

The giant kings and the monsters were also fighting in a place that wasn’t related to the place Loki was being held at.

How would the play they set up together end? Who would be the one to play a different card?

Freya buried her body on the throne that only the king of Gods could sit on. She put the ring that proved that one was the king of Gods on after hesitating for a long time.

Then she started her first task as the king of Gods.

&

The first duel of the magician king and Odin that notified of the start of the second Great War occurred while the two of them hid their cards thoroughly.

They each took out one card that the other was unaware of and got closer to victory.

But this time, it was the opposite. The two of them knew of the cards the other had. There were no more hidden cards.

Odin had the appearance of a normal warrior of Valhalla. He hid himself with magic and changed his hairstyle and the color of his hair with his magic. Transformation magic was a very easy thing for him, as he was also the God of disguise.

He would fight normally and advance.

Bracky and Siri fought next to him but it was only for a moment. Odin didn't stay next to those that had already reached the level of superior warriors for too long.

Heimdall and Njord were fighting in a distant place. Odin, who had even hidden his presence as a God, defeated the evil spirit in front of him with difficulty.

He could see a crumbled fortress from far away; Loki was hanging from it.

The foolish yet wise king of Gods.

It was the nickname the head of Mimir used to call Odin. It was certainly a contradictory word but those were words that described him too well.

The one that resists the destiny he can't avoid.

The one that is wise yet chooses the foolish option.

Odin laughed unconsciously. Perhaps, it might be the last

laughter in his long life.

Odin took one more step.

It was a normal step but he could feel it the moment his feet left the ground.

He had crossed the line.

Odin looked at Loki once again.

And Loki was also looking at him.

&

Loki smiled the moment they exchanged glances.

In the end, his hopes had collapsed.

He had hoped that Odin wouldn't come, because he would certainly do it otherwise.

But what Loki hoped for was a bit different.

He didn't want to be rescued, but be killed by Odin.

He wanted to not be used by the giants any longer and for Odin to act as a wise and sly God of war and not be a fatal weakness to him.

But his wishes hadn't come true.

Loki laughed soundlessly. He thought that Odin was a really foolish one.

He had acted as a spy for a hundred years below the magician king. It was a role that could kill him at any time that his identity became exposed.

For Odin to have entrusted that role to him but still come to rescue that someone that wasn't regretful no matter when he died? And he was doing so himself?

It was a really emotional thing; and it wasn't a judgement that a single piece of rationality could be pieced from.

But it was natural. It was something the Odin that Loki knew

would do.

That's why it wasn't regrettable.

Loki raised his head and looked at the sky.

The card the magician king had prepared was starting.

&

The World Wolf, Fenrir, was the end of Odin, which had been decided by fate.

The moment Odin crossed the line, the sky opened up. The World Wolf, which had been fighting with the army of the frost giant King, Harmarti, against Thor's army, appeared.

The magician king was riding on its back.

In addition to that, he used a strong, mysterious power. It was magic that could be said to be the real power of the magician king, which enabled him to survive even though the previous Five Fingers had been killed in the Great War.

The World Wolf opened its mouth widely. Then the magician king spread his arms and activated the magic he had been preparing for a long time.

A huge circle formed where Loki hung with the magician king, who was above him, as the center. The lives of all of the evil spirits and giants which were in its range were drained from them.

It was easily thousands of lives; perhaps ten thousand lives.

It was a magic that took only the lives of the ones which had symbols engraved on them but the ones that didn't have symbols also got swept into it because of the amazing after-effect.

The life force that was gathered was transmitted to the magician king.

It was a simple structure of giving an offering and obtaining strength but a really strong magic as well.

Almost everyone that was inside of the circle collapsed to the ground. There were even some that dried out so much they started to break apart.

Only one person remained below the strong wind generated by the flow.

The king of Gods, Odin.

A mere pitiful old man in front of the World Wolf.

In the first place, Odin had no choices available.

He had hoped Thor could tie down the World Wolf but it was an idle thought.

Thor might have been looking at something that was presumed to be the World Wolf, but it was merely a fake created by the magician king.

The World Wolf growled and the magician king looked down at Odin.

What are you going to do now?

What can you do now?

Odin faced the magician king. He put all the sounds he heard behind him and spoke in the silence, which seemed fake.

Nothing.

He had come to rescue Loki but it was beyond his capabilities.

There was nothing Odin could do.

The magician king was perplexed at his calm look. But he then realized it. He urged the World Wolf forward while he absorbed the life force he had gathered. Then he tried to gulp down Odin in one bite.

But he was a bit faster.

It wasn't Odin.

It was the man hanging on steel chains.

When he first faced him, Loki had read Odin's thoughts.

He was an emotional man. He had sincerely put his life at stake to rescue Loki.

But he was also the cruel and sly God of war. He didn't wish it for real and rather, was ignoring it but he knew of one hand he could play.

It was something that could happen when several conditions were met.

Odin and the magician king were gambling while showing their hand but that wasn't true for Loki. He still had one more card available.

Loki, who had become powerless.

Loki, who could do nothing.

But regardless of that, he didn't kill himself. He neglected the risks even though he knew that the king of Gods was going to come to rescue him.

It wasn't because the magician king had prevented Loki from committing suicide.

He had prepared one hand after he saw the same magic the magician king was using now a hundred years ago.

The reason Loki had entered the ranks of the magician king was also to prepare for this day that was going to come one day.

Loki looked at Odin.

Odin looked at Loki.

Tears didn't flow from Odin's only eye. Loki looked at his poor eyes, that couldn't cry even though he wanted to because the tears had gotten dried up, and smiled.

What could happen when Odin came to rescue Loki?

Something that the magician king might do in the middle of the battlefield.

Everything turned out as Loki had expected. Odin had wished for Loki's prediction to be wrong but it didn't turn out that way. Odin was an excellent bait this time too.

When the magician king increased the speed of absorption, Loki activated the magic he had prepared for a hundred years. He didn't even need magical power to activate it, so the plans of the magician king became useless.

He wouldn't break the absorption magic. Rather, he would enter the flow.. He would change the flow itself, as releasing poison in a flowing river.

The magician king noticed the Loki's tricks. He hurriedly tried to stop the absorption but it was too late to stop the flow. Loki's life and magical power were mixed into the flow. They became a lethal poison and were transmitted to the magician king.

The magician king let out a roar and struggled and the World Wolf became bewildered.

Odin was still standing still. He looked at Loki and Loki looked beyond Odin.

It was because he wanted to see someone for the last time.

But he couldn't see him. His vision started to darken and soon he couldn't see anything.

But Loki still didn't lose his smile. It was too late and he couldn't see anymore but Odin had squeezed out the magical power he could in front of Odin and connected Loki with the one he wanted to see with his magic.

“Father!”

Hela screamed from far away. It was a cry. Loki forced himself to smile. The screams of the magician king became rougher and tears

fell down from Loki's eyes. He raised his head and tried to look at Fenrir but it was impossible now for him.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

It was the price for giving birth to two existences that wished to destroy the world.

Loki's heart exploded. His last thread of life became the last poison and completely disrupted the magic of the magician king.

The World Wolf roared and the magician king released the concentrated power of life forcefully and struggled.

Odin closed his eye amidst the fuss. He shed tears that he thought he wouldn't be able to shed anymore and moved his hand.

The giant kings were running there.

The group of the Temple and the warriors of Valhalla that had noticed that the strategy had worked also came rushing there.

Freya activated her magic. She opened up a space door that she had prepared five days ago, only for this day. The magician king couldn't stop Freya's magic after receiving lethal damage.

It was the secret plan that Odin had prepared to face the World Wolf and the magician king.

Hraesvelg exited the space door and spread his wings widely, and the black dragon, Nidhogg, roared.

Tae Ho, who was standing on the head of the black dragon, looked at the magician king and activated his saga.

[Saga: Idun's Warrior]

The power of a Goddess, shining in gold.

Hraesvelg and Nidhogg charged towards the World Wolf. Tae Ho roared and several others that were only waiting for that moment clashed, with the magician king and Tae Ho at the center.

Everyone knew.

Today, right at this moment, this battle would decide the second Great War.

The battle had started.

It was a time when the sun was at its peak.

< Episode 44 – The Great War (4) > End

Episode 44/Chapter 5: The Great War (5)

Odin dropped his shoulders. He hadn't collapsed after using the last of his strength but he looked to be at his limits, as if he would break down at any moment.

Odin shed tears. The tears, which fell for the first time in a hundred years didn't know when to stop.

He knew it.

He didn't wish it and it needed a procedure for which several conditions had to be met.

But in the end it had ended up happening.

What would Loki do and what kind of fate would he face?

At the end of the Great War, he wasn't able to stop him when Loki said that he would enter the ranks of the magician king.

However, he ended up relying on his sacrifice.

And this was the same.

He had come to rescue Loki but in the end he made himself die.

The foolish yet clear King of Gods.

The cruel and sly God of War.

Odin's chest clenched. He grabbed his chest which seemed like it would tear at any moment and raised his head. He turned to look up at the world wolf that was roaring in rage.

"Win."

It was the last stage Loki had made.

It would be the last opportunity.

The magician king vomited blood because of the lethal blow that had been inflicted by the explosion of the absorption.

The world wolf, which seemed to have no consciousness, seemed

to have detected the death of its father and increased its size in an instant and became more enraged.

Nidhogg passed over Odin's head and Hraesvelg's big wings covered the land with its shadow.

The ancient dragon and the king of birds...

They would be able to cope with the world wolf if it was the two of them.

"Please win."

For Loki.

For Asgard and the nine realms!

The black dragon fired a breath filled with poison and a green current rushed towards the world wolf.

The giant kings and the superior warriors of Valhalla clashed. Strong existences filled the space that had been emptied after the evil spirits disappeared after the magic the magician king used.

Witacheon charged like a gale. Bracky awakened as the son of a God and fired lightning. Siri transformed into a wolf Goddess and put Ullr's divine power on her arrows.

"My king!"

Avalt, who was hidden in the shadows, showed himself and the giant of Sea also appeared, not far away from him. They tried to run towards the world wolf, which was covered in poison.

But Bracky and Siri stopped the giant of Night.

Witacheon intercepted the path of the giant of Sea.

The structure of the battlefield changed. The hole that had been made in the centre became a whirlpool. It was as if a hole was made in a tub filled with water. The strong ones were starting to gather more and more.

Njord and Heimdall, who were maintaining their ranks at other

places advanced like waves. Tauchi and the other giant kings also increased their speed.

Hraesvelg occupied the sky above the head of the world wolf and the black dragon held the second poison breath instead of rushing recklessly.

It was the correct option.

[Saga: The Jaws of the World Wolf]

The sky and the ground split. The huge jaws of the wolf gulped down everything in its path, including the poison.

The evil spirits and giants were erased.

The warriors of Valhalla that had been fighting against them also disappeared.

It was an overwhelming power of destruction – no, annihilation. Hraesvelg generated a strong wind with his wings. He pressed down the world wolf from above and at the same time, fired his feathers, which were like blades.

The black dragon moved sideways to dodge the jaws of the world wolf and fired a poison breath once again. The world wolf acted calm, as if the poison didn't pose a problem to him at all but it was the same as for Hrumbak. The poison would certainly show its effects in the later stages.

In addition, the magician king wasn't the world wolf. He had to desperately use magic to block the poison, even while he was vomiting black blood.

Loki! Loki! Loki!

The magician king screamed in rage. That rage reached the one that was standing on the head of the black dragon.

Idun's warrior.

The commander of Idun!

The world wolf roared once again and moved. He went against the gale generated by Hraesvelg with his overwhelming power. His body was hit by the falling feathers and he took a leap but the height of that jump transcended imagination.

The world wolf bit the empty air. It was the place Hraesvelg had just been at. Hraesvelg dripped cold sweat; he had barely managed to dodge the attack of the world wolf by twisting his body. The physical abilities of the world wolf had transcended his expectations.

“Bastard!”

But he couldn't lose to it. Hraesvelg let out a cry and charged towards it to deal a blow to the wolf, which couldn't move freely in the air.

The world wolf looked at him and remained still on purpose. Rather, it glared at Hraesvelg and released a strong magical power.

[Saga: The One That Conceived a Catastrophe]

The cry of a queen banshee exploded in the air. It wasn't a cry that spread everywhere, but was only directed to Hraesvelg.

The invisible strength hit Hraesvelg. Hraesvelg twisted his body instead of facing the attack head on. It was a wise judgement. The world wolf bit the air this time as well and fell.

The black dragon charged towards it. It wanted to bite down on the world wolf that was defenseless because it had used consecutive skills against Hraesvelg.

The black dragon bit the stomach of the world wolf and the world wolf bit the neck of the black dragon.

They both crashed into the ground. The world wolf gnawed at the neck of the dragon. The teeth of the black dragon bit the stomach of the world wolf but it couldn't gnaw on it.

But it was enough.

The one that gotten tangled with the wolf was the fake one. The black dragon stroked its wings and opened its mouth widely, to bite down on the neck of the world wolf that had now become as big as the black dragon.

The world wolf laughed with its eyes. It looked at the black dragon and opened its mouth similarly. They faced each other once again.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

Right at that moment the saga was activated. The location of the fake dragon, which was about to disappear because its strength was almost used up, changed with Nidhogg. She fired a poison breath towards the world wolf that had approached her in an instant and then bit its body.

They were the teeth of a real black dragon.

The world wolf moved; an action filled with madness, when compared to before, when only its leather had been pierced. It put strength in its legs and moved its body by its own. The piece of flesh that had been bitten was ripped off forcefully and then the wolf turned itself to bite at the neck of the black dragon.

A big wound was made in the stomach of the world wolf and the poison of the black dragon entered the body of the world wolf.

But the wolf didn't care about it. It destroyed the scales of the dragon with its teeth and then bit the flesh.

“Kyaak!”

Nidhogg screamed at the unbearable pain. Tae Ho hurriedly cut off the connection with Nidhogg's body with ‘The One That Controls Dragons’. He called the fake Nidhogg next to himself and exchanged its location with the real Nidhogg. He embraced Nidhogg, who had started to cry while grabbing her neck and jumped from the head of the black dragon.

A strong poison was released from the body of the black dragon

after Nidhogg left it. Green poison covered the body of the world wolf in an instant.

Tae Ho leapt into the sky and looked at it. Hraesvelg was gathering strength, in order to deal a decisive blow to the world wolf that lost its strength because it had suffered a big injury.

[Saga: The One That Conceived a Catastrophe]

[Saga: The Jaws of the World Wolf]

Two sagas were activated simultaneously. The cry of the queen banshee scattered the poison and the jaws of the world wolf swept down the sky and the ground.

The eyes of the world wolf had gotten blood congested in them. Its breathing was rough and an overwhelming amount of blood flowed from the wound in its stomach.

Hraesvelg charged towards the world wolf. He drew a trajectory between the two sagas which was close to perfection. It was a body slam. It was an attack that fired off his body, that emanated magic power, like a projectile.

Hraesvelg surged into the air.

The king of the white birds – his huge body clashed against the world wolf.

The world wolf screamed. It got tangled with Hraesvelg and was sent flying a few kilometres. Just its aftereffects made everything in its surroundings disappear.

Hraesvelg stood in the air and breathed roughly. Tae Ho, who was still embracing Nidhogg, gripped the summoning rock and at that moment Rolo and Adenmaha were summoned. After they transformed into dragons, they fired the right of the king.

The world wolf couldn't dodge it this time either. The icy and fiery breaths covered it.

But it didn't fall. Instead, it stood its messy, bloody body up. Its

body, that had grown to become as big as the black dragon, shrunk once again to become a few meters tall and it had even received lethal damage, but it didn't fall down.

It was a nasty vitality. In addition, the magician king was riding on its back. He started to recite a chant with a maddened voice after he shook away the aftereffects of the magic.

The world wolf charged forward while losing blood.

The strong curse magic became five spheres that roamed the surroundings of the world wolf and the wolf charged forward. He rushed towards Tae Ho at an overwhelming speed.

Hraesvelg flew towards Tae Ho. Tae Ho understood his intention and threw Nidhogg into the air. When Hraesvelg snatched Nidhogg in the air and embraced her, Tae Ho faced the curse spheres head on. He swung the sword he was holding with all his strength.

[Saga: Sword of the Sun]

The sword Gallatin of the sun knight Gawain.

They were almost in the afternoon so the power of the saga greatly amplified Tae Ho's divine power. The huge blade of sun made with golden light swept out against the curse spheres.

Kwagagagang!

Fierce explosions fired off in consecution.

Adenmaha and Rolo threw themselves towards the world wolf. The world wolf used the 'Jaws of the World Wolf' but Rolo twisted his body and dodged the attack. Adenmaha fired an icy breath on the head of the world wolf. She then landed on the ground and swiped her tail towards the world wolf – precisely speaking, towards the giant king riding on its waist.

But it didn't happen.

She did delay the world wolf for a moment, thanks to her ice

breath but the tail sweep went wrong.

The giant king grabbed Adenmaha's tail. He showed his strength even though he was at the verge of dying. Adenmaha couldn't pull her tail away. Rather, she received a strong curse directly through her tail. Several magical runes appeared on Adenmaha's body.

She hurriedly transformed back into a Goddess. Thanks to that she was able to get out of the hands of the magician king but part of the curse still remained on her. In addition, she wasn't able to endure the attacks of the world wolf and magician king even for a moment when she was in her Goddess appearance.

The magician king moved his body and threw part of his magical power.

Adenmaha activated some mystical magic but she was too late. The curse that had already infiltrated her body slowed down her movements.

"Adenmaha!" Tae Ho yelled.

Adenmaha was late but that wasn't the case for Tae Ho. He recalled Adenmaha with the summoning rock.

The magical power of the magician king destroyed the ground. At that moment, the world wolf charged towards Tae Ho. The distance was now short between them.

Adenmaha collapsed at Tae Ho's feet. He didn't have the time to deal with her so he stood in front of her, to try to endure. The world wolf vomited blood once again while charging. Rolo fired his breath towards the world wolf as he approached it.

The magician king didn't allow any more obstructions. He left the world wolf to face Rolo and then charged towards Tae Ho. Swinging his arms, he fired a strong curse.

Tae Ho made a quick judgement.

He raised Caliburn instead of Gallatin. Gallatin was the strongest

sword he had right now but in this moment, he had to protect. He had to endure the curse with his entire body as he couldn't leave Adenmaha's side. He needed the holy glory of Caliburn rather than the power of the sun.

[Saga: King of Camelot]

The glory of Camelot emanated its light. He raised his sword and emitted his strength and an invisible wall was formed. It blocked the power of the curse.

But it didn't end at that. The magician king landed on the ground and extended his arms forward after letting out a roar. His posture was one that was pressing down at Tae Ho and Adenmaha.

The magical power of the magician king became one stage stronger. It seemed like the curse had also become stronger, as Adenmaha let out a groan and struggled, because of its influence.

The world wolf bit down on a Rolo's wing and made him crash downwards.

Nidhogg screamed. Hraesvelg, who was about to send her to a safe place, hurriedly turned to look at Tae Ho.

Avalt wore a complacent smile even while facing Siri and Bracky.

Grund laughed and Witacheon let out a scream.

Perhaps it was an obvious thing.

Even though he had received lethal damage, he was still the magician king.

And the one that was at his side was the world wolf, which would bring destruction to the world.

Die and disappear like this; the nightmare-like existence, Idun's warrior!

The magician king vomited black blood and amplified his magical power even more. He wanted to end Tae Ho before a rescuing hand came to help him.

Adenmaha moved her lips. She had said to leave her behind but the words couldn't be formed. No, even if they had been formed, Tae Ho would never leave her behind.

He had to endure. He had to somehow disperse the magical power of the magician king.

Odin recited a chant, but with difficulty, as the existence of the world wolf obstructed his magic.

Siri used the opening created when Bracky struck the giant of Night with all his strength and ran towards Tae Ho.

Tae Ho's knees bent.

The pressing power became much stronger.

Nidhogg cried. The king of the depths of the earth, Tromber, surged up from the ground and blocked Siri and Hraesvelg.

Cuchulainn let out a roar. He yelled encouragement to Tae Ho.

Tae Ho activated the Sentence of the Milesians. Idun cried and gave him more strength.

The glory of Camelot.

The light of Camelot!

It wasn't enough.

Tae Ho knew it more than anyone else.

Heda cried. Even while panting, Adenmaha barely managed to activate a mystical power. She tried to assist Tae Ho with the little strength she had.

'Tae Ho, my warrior Tae Ho!'

Idun's voice reached him and Heda's cry was heard.

And right at that moment...

When Adenmaha's mystical power reached Tae Ho...

A voice was heard through the Sentence of the Milesian.

&

It was a moment that seemed like an eternity.

It was a memory left in Caliburn. No, it would be good to call it a remnant of the soul.

He called out to Tae Ho and told him...

[Synchro Rate: 79%]

It wasn't enough yet. That was the reason he wasn't able to hear the voice, even though he had held Caliburn for a long time.

But right at this moment, his voice reached him.

It may have been a miracle made by Idun's and Heda's eagerness.

It may have been a necessity created by Adenmaha's hope.

No, everything.

The miracle was made at that moment when the hope of the girls and the yell of Cuchulainn became one.

[Synchro rate: 80%]

He told him.

And showed Tae Ho; Caliburn's real strength.

The real strength only the successor of Erin could emit.

Tae Ho knew who he was.

The king of Camelot.

The owner of the fairy god sword, the pinnacle of Erin that leads the knights of the round table.

He remembered the first time Tae Ho pulled Caliburn.

He had also witnessed the remaining souls of the knights of the round table sacrifice themselves to save Tae Ho.

Mordred had died. There were no longer any knights of the round table. The only thing that remained in the world was the

remnant of king Arthur.

But it was enough.

King Arthur spoke to Tae Ho.

“Caliburn was broken once long ago.”

It had become unusable after being destroyed. Because of that King Arthur needed a new sword.

He followed Merlin’s advice and went to find the fairy of the lake and she gave a new god sword to him.

The fairy god sword Excalibur.

The strongest holy sword of Erin that represented the king of Camelot.

The day King Arthur lost and Erin was destroyed, Excalibur disappeared. Merlin looked for it for a long time but couldn’t find it.

It was an obvious thing.

It was because there was a secret only King Arthur and the fairy of the lake knew.

The fairy of the lake had granted strength to Caliburn.

It gathered the moonlight and starlight to refine Caliburn and gave birth to Excalibur.

Excalibur lost its light the day King Arthur died. It had lost its strength and returned to become Caliburn once again.

The story of King Arthur was simple and at the same time, a useless one.

Erin didn’t exist anymore.

The holy lake and the fairy of the lake also didn’t exist.

But King Arthur shook his head. He smiled in that moment that seemed like an eternity and shrugged his shoulders.

“But don’t you have her?”

The existence that was like the fairy of the lake.

Someone that would give him strength.

“It’s now time to hatch from your egg, new king of Camelot, successor of Erin.”

The remnant of king Arthur smiled. He then became light and disappeared.

[Synchro rate: 81%]

The moment of eternity ended.

Tae Ho put strength in his hand which wielded Caliburn. He gritted his teeth and glared at the magician king.

Then he used what King Arthur had taught him; what had been added to Caliburn.

[Saga: Idun’s Warrior]

The infectious golden light and power of the Goddess.

The power of Idun was added to Caliburn and then it woke up the real form of Caliburn, just like the fairy of the lake had.

What started to shine then and what woke up was the real glory of Camelot.

A strong light was released and the real sword of liberation opened its eyes.

The fairy god sword, Excalibur.

A divine sword of Erin that had the power of Asgard added to it!

The magician king opened his eyes widely. He had seen the light emanating in front of him before.

That’s why he wasn’t able to believe it and that’s why he let out a roar.

“My king,” cried Merlin, who was fighting in the distance.

Scathach also did the same. They shuddered; they thought they wouldn't have been able to see the light of Erin again.

Adenmaha cried. Cuchulainn laughed loudly and also cried.

But they weren't the only ones. Everyone who had witnessed the destruction of Erin a hundred years ago remembered it. They hadn't forgotten the shiny light, which was like the morning glory.

Erin's light.

Erin's glory.

Tae Ho rose up. He pushed back the magical power of the magician king with the shining Excalibur. Then he released the glory of Erin and activated the Sentence of the Milesian. He then activated the other strength that was contained in the Sentence, which represented the successor of Erin.

[Synchro rate: 83%]

[Myth ranked saga]

[King of Erin]

Tae Ho swung Excalibur and dispersed the magical power of the magician king.

< Episode 44 – The Great War (5) > End

Episode 45/Chapter 1: King of Erin (1)

The light put an end to the darkness.

The long night had passed and the glory of the morning shone once again.

&

One world was destroyed. It ended up disappearing, swept away by the enraged flames. But there was still a thread of light remaining...

&

Merlin couldn't say a word. He just looked and cried once again.

He knew that light. He wanted to see it once again.

The light would shine brighter the deeper and darker the darkness was.

Merlin laughed as he understood. The light was too small to shine on the entire battlefield but regardless of that, everyone in the battlefield had noticed the identity of that light.

It wasn't only limited to Camelot.

In addition, it wasn't only Camelot's by now.

The fairy god sword, Excalibur. Erin's god sword. The light shining from the successor of Erin and the real king of Erin would be the last light Erin left!

"My king," Merlin said, claiming the new king.

He had cried because of the previous king that had passed away.

The knights of the round table had passed away first. They had sacrificed what little remained of their souls and protected their king.

He looked at him instead of them and faced him.

The light surged up. It extended through the sky and split the clouds. The golden light split the world like the light of the creation of the world.

The light was beautiful. It was similar to the light that surged up from the tips of the hands of King Arthur.

It was the light of Erin.

&

The black magic broke away and the power of the curse was purified.

The magician king stepped back. He was pushed back as much as he was pushing down.

The golden light had completely covered his eyes. It was surging up to the sky.

The magician king shuddered. Then he froze at the light he thought he would never see again.

It was the same for the others; the Gods of Asgard and the warriors of Valhalla, the giant kings of Jotunheim and the monsters.

They were all looking at one place and they soon realized it. They thought of the same, yet opposite things.

“Idun’s warrior!” the magician king roared and increased his magical power. He gulped down the magic that was released every time he vomited black blood.

But it was in vain. It was a childish thing that would destroy his soul and body. But he needed to do that. If he wanted to crush Idun’s warrior – the king of Erin, he also needed to put his life at stake!

“Excalibur,” someone said.

And the world that had stopped, like a lie, started to move once again. Everyone looked to a single place and moved in the same

direction.

The giant kings were heading towards Tae Ho but this time the warriors of Valhalla blocked their path.

The king of the depths of the earth, Trombe, tried to dig down once again but Siri and Hraesvelg stopped him. The giant of night, Avalt, squeezed out magic desperately and dispersed Bracky's lightning.

The giant of sea, Grund, was tied down by Witacheon. Heimdal and Njord arrived in front of the giants, who had left the warriors they were facing and were turning around. They, who had protected the fortress of Valhalla every time, released their divine power wholly at the most important battlefield.

Even the few commanders that remained behind to protect Valhalla headed to the same place. Rather than facing the enemies in front of them, they ran towards the streak of light shining brightly in the center of the battlefield.

It seemed like the entire battlefield had been swept by a storm and the place Tae Ho and the magician king were could be described as the eye of the storm.

It was silent. It seemed as if all the battles cries and yells of the ones trying to kill and the ones trying to stop them had been blocked.

A superb balance of strength formed and a battlefield for only the two of them was created.

It would only last a few moments. Or perhaps it would be shorter than that. But it was enough to settle things.

Tae Ho looked at the magician king while holding Excalibur. He grasped the strong magic that the magician king was preparing with the 'Eyes of the Dragon' and then spoke faster than him.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

The Valkyries were summoned. He cursed out to things like the battlefield meant only for the two of them and activated several sagas.

[Saga: The Warrior's Equipment]

[Saga: The Legendary Pro Gamer]

[Saga: The Hammer of the Blacksmith Doesn't Slip]

The Valkyries stood their weapons and spread. Then they charged towards the magician king.

The fake Reginleif blew the Valkyrie horn and amplified the strength of the nine Valkyries that had been summoned.

“Bastard!”

The magician king let out a roar. He emitted strong curse magic to try to scatter the fake Valkyries but it wasn't possible. The glory of Erin was protecting them.

Rasgrid slashed the ankle of the magician king.

Ingrid stabbed at an opening in his armor with her holy spear. It was the spear that had defeated the first field monster, the Kraken.

That wasn't the end. The fake Scathach, who was particularly strong even among them, interfered with the magic of the magician king, which was about to be completed, with the sword of light that she swung.

The magician king moved his hands roughly and the rough attack made the fake Gandur disappear. Rasgrid was crushed and Ingrid was thrown to the ground and couldn't move.

At that moment, the magician king was still looking at Tae Ho, but Tae Ho decided to wait for the magician king. He had made him unable to look elsewhere by chasing his movements.

Adenmaha...

There was no need to call for her. However, she wasn't

incompetent at all. She stood up and transformed into a sea serpent. Then she fired an icy breath at his chest, which was exposed because he was too concentrated on Tae Ho.

It wasn't possible to inflict fatal damage but it was an unforeseen attack. The magician king's head became dizzy and he lost Tae Ho for a moment.

He turned around immediately but Tae Ho had already disappeared.

Where?

He rolled his eyes and then could see him. Tae Ho jumped up and down diagonally while drawing a beautiful trajectory. In addition, he wasn't only holding Excalibur in his hands.

He was also holding the sword of the knight of the sun, Gawain.

His sword of the sun, which was like his trademark!

[Saga: Sword of the Sun]

Gallatin shone in Tae Ho's left hand and it emitted an overwhelming power, as if to prove that the time was close to midday.

Tae Ho poured down attacks.

It was a technique that belonged only to Kalsted, with nothing of Scathach's techniques in it. The two hand sword techniques were executed by using two swords.

Martial arts like this couldn't exist in reality at all.

But it did exist in Dark Age. The dragon knight Kalsted could obviously wield a pair of swords and he could also wield two huge spears freely.

Two wings.

The two swords became a pair of wings. The lights of Erin and the sun became fire and lightning and covered the magician king.

The magician king clenched his fists. He released the magic he had gathered once again at random. He pushed away Tae Ho and then swung magical blades to tear apart the fake Valkyries. He also called for a huge lightning strike, as if he wanted to die with them.

Kwagagang!

Black lightning fell down. It then split into a hundred and covered the ground.

Njord didn't turn around. He just focused on cutting the path, stopping it from reaching Tae Ho and the magician king by creating waves and hails. It wasn't different for Heimdall.

Bracky and Siri also did the same. Rather, the ones who became impatient were the giants.

The world wolf, that had increased in size once again roared. It stepped down on Rolo and tried to charge to the place the magician king was at.

But Nidhogg also didn't stay still. She let out a roar instead of trembling. She rose, even though her neck had been torn. This was because it hadn't been her essence. It was her magic armor.

She could fight even though she had gotten a part of her neck torn off and could still fight, even if she became worse than that.

That's why she had to fight. She had to stand up and stop it.

The black dragon attacked the world wolf from behind. The wolf, which wasn't in perfect conditions due to the lethal damage inflicted by Hraesvelg, couldn't dodge the attack perfectly. The black dragon made the wolf lose some time.

It was the first time Nidhogg had tried controlling the body from a distance. It was hard and difficult. The pain, which was still being transmitted, bit down on her consciousness. But she didn't fall down. She glared at the world wolf even while crying, "The strongest one shall accompany you!"

Hraesvelg entrusted Trombe to Siri and Juh Palgye and laughed. Nidhogg, who was rolling on the ground, made an impossible movement with her body.

The battle of the monsters, the world wolf, the ancient dragon and the king of birds, resumed once more and time kept flowing.

Tae Ho slashed away the black lightning that fell by swinging Excalibur and Gallatin and looked at the magician king and his surroundings with ‘The Eyes of the Dragon’. Then he activated his saga once again.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

Heda appeared next to Tae Ho. She wasn’t the fake, but the real one. She was bewildered, as she was transmitting her strength as Idun, but she then understood Tae Ho’s thoughts. It was possible, as she was connected to him by Idun’s warrior.

Heda embraced Tae Ho from behind. The magician king recovered slightly, to the point he could take a breath, and watched Tae Ho while panting. He put his guard towards the Goddess who had a strong divine power and hurriedly prepared some magic.

“McLaren!” Tae Ho yelled. The summoning rock activated and McLaren surged up by piercing the ground.

A rock serpent was merely a bug in front of the magician king.

But it didn’t matter.

That wasn’t important.

McLaren covered Tae Ho for a moment and at that moment something the magician king had never imagined happened.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

Switching places.

The fake Heda...

She had been in the group of nine that was summoned at the start but she hadn't attacked the magician king like the others. She just hid herself.

Black lightning fell and McLaren surged up.

The fake Heda stood behind the magician king. She had taken a leap the moment McLaren surged up to stand behind him.

The fake Heda disappeared and the real Heda appeared in that place. Tae Ho, who was being embraced treasuredly by Heda, also crossed the space.

The magician king realized it. He was surprised but he couldn't look back.

It wasn't because it was too late. There was another reason.

'For Asgard and the nine realms.'

It was the last words Loki left behind and the nasty curse his last will made.

His will, that was mixed in his magic, stopped the movements of the magician king. It incapacitated his movements in an instant.

"Loki!" the magician king screamed. Odin cried and Tae Ho roared.

Excalibur and Gallatin pierced the neck of the magician king. It made the tens of meters tall magician king fall forwards.

The ground shook. Excalibur and Gallatin released a stronger light, even though they were stuck in the body of the magician king.

The magician king struggled. He released his magical power randomly. A strong power that could destroy the ground and tear the sky swept the surroundings.

Heda protected Tae Ho with all her strength. The brilliance of Idun's golden light protected the two people.

The magician king tried to stand up with his trembling limbs. Tae Ho let his hands go from his swords instead of putting more strength into them.

Why?

The one that had the doubt was the magician king.

His head was still working clearly even though he was suffering a terrible pain.

And he could find the answer.

But the answer was really terrible.

The Sentence of the Milesian.

Excalibur taught him the moment it had pierced the neck of the magician king.

It told of the king of Erin, and the successor of Erin that would inherit everything from Erin.

The thing the magician king was hiding; the piece that was stuck so deep he couldn't remove it.

'Come! Spear of death!' Cuchulainn roared. Tae Ho had awoken the last piece through the Sentence of the Milesian.

The spear of death.

The vivo of the Land of Darkness.

The real and only soul companion of the great hero, Cuchulainn!

Tae Ho gripped the air and at that moment, the old wound of the magician king opened once again. The last piece of Gae Bolg surged up and headed towards the spear of death that was in Tae Ho's right hand.

The magician king roared like a beast but it was meaningless. Excalibur and Gallatin emanated light once again and sealed the movements of the magician king. Tae Ho concentrated all his strength on the completed spear of death – the real Gae Bolg.

“Noooooooooooo!”

The giant of Night, Avalt, despaired. Scathach watched moment as the queen of the Land of Shadow.

Erin and the sun.

A nasty darkness exploded from between the two bright lights. The spear of death coveted the life of the magician king!

The magician king couldn't endure it anymore. He had already received a fatal wound from Loki. He had barely managed to endure Excalibur and Gallatin but he was already at his limit. He couldn't resist the power of death which was added in the last moment.

The curse of Gae Bolg destroyed the heart of the magician king. The magician king smiled bitterly instead of despairing.

He admitted his end as one that hoped for the destruction of the world.

Avalt fell down in his place and Grund wailed.

A storm of light wailed.

It was the light that was emitted by the overwhelming amount of runes that had started to surge up from the corpse of the magician king.

Tae Ho raised his head from between them. He had defeated the magician king but the battle hadn't ended yet.

There was one more enemy he had to defeat.

The world wolf, Fenrir.

Tae Ho looked in front of him.

< Episode 45 – King of Erin (1) > End

Episode 45/Chapter 2: King of Erin (2)

Tae Ho felt like his entire body was breaking.

He had used Excalibur and Gallatin and on top of that, Gae Bolg. Each of these weapons could be considered to be mythical by themselves. It obviously required a big price.

In addition, the magic of the magician king was strong. The curse magic that had been amplified with absorption magic lost its direction the moment the magician king died. It was like a blade storm that randomly went wild.

Idun's blessing sustained Tae Ho. It forcefully grabbed his consciousness, which should have been cut off by then.

The warm golden light was protecting him. The light surging from Excalibur was the glory of Erin and Idun's affection.

Tae Ho looked at his side. Heda, who was exhausted because she was transmitting an overwhelming amount of divine power to Tae Ho but was also enduring with Idun's blessing, noticed his gaze and sent a slight smile towards him.

Heda's hair was originally red but right now it was gold. She wasn't using the eye covering that covered half of her face but she was now standing there as Idun.

The rune storm of the magician king continued and Tae Ho and Heda absorbed his runes inside of it. They replenished Idun's divine power with the runes.

A howl was heard.

It came from the giant of night, Avalt. Bracky was swinging his hammer towards him.

Tae Ho let out a sigh. It wasn't only Avalt. Everyone in the battlefield had realized his death. They could now escape because their king had died but it didn't turn out like that. Part of them

moved to take revenge for the magician king, to kill the warrior that had defeated the magician king.

Juh Palgye continued to turn over the earth and exposed the king of the deep earth, who had tried to dig inside the ground. Siri kept firing arrows in succession and checked her surroundings. Njord and Heimdall were creating natural disasters and blocking the evil spirits and giants from approaching. But it didn't look easy. In the first place, this battlefield had much more giants in it.

They wouldn't be able to maintain the 'wall' for much longer. The warriors of Valhalla were also gathering but this dogfight would turn poisonous.

Tae Ho knew it and Heda also did. Because of that, the two of them turned to look into the distance.

The world wolf was at that place.

It stepped on the body of the black dragon and let out an enraged howl. Hraesvelg's body, that had now lost one wing, was currently facing it.

He wouldn't be able to last much longer. That fight would end with a victory for the world wolf.

But the world wolf wasn't safe either. It's injuries were great. Blood and its intestines flew out from its stomach which had been bitten by Nidhogg and its right eye, which had been pecked by Hraesvelg, broke and completely lost its light.

In addition, it was in a poisoned state. It kept vomiting black blood while fighting. The attack Hraesvelg had executed with his entire body was enough to threaten its life.

The sky and the earth rang after looking at the world wolf for a few seconds. The superb balance that had been created by the Gods and warriors of Valhalla and the giants and evil spirits of Jotunheim was breaking apart.

Tae Ho closed his eyes and thought during the flow, which

seemed as if it had stopped

It was enough, as they had killed the magician king.

It would be better to retreat and reorganize themselves. Now that they had lost their pillar called the magician king, the army of Jotunheim would certainly become weaker.

It was logical.

Tae Ho shook his head at that thought.

The world wolf Fenrir.

Odin's end.

The beast of destruction that would bring the world to an end.

They only had this moment.

Now was the only opportunity, as it was weakened due to Nidhogg and Hraesvelg.

Hraesvelg's neck had been bitten. Tae Ho opened his eyes and grabbed Heda's hand and she nodded.

A scream was heard. Njord let go of a part of the giants. The cries of all kinds of monsters were transmitted from the sky.

Tae Ho and Heda looked at the same place. Someone had stood up there. Adenmaha transformed into a Goddess; she knew what she had to do. Tae Ho extended his hand towards her and activated his saga and transmitted part of the strength absorbed from the rune storm to her.

[Saga: Master of Frost]

Adenmaha transformed into the white frost dragon, Javier. Tae Ho and Heda rode on her.

“Let's go.”

Adenmaha flew up. The sky was filled entirely with flying type monsters but they were unafraid.

[Saga: The Charge of the Warrior is Like a Storm]

[Saga: The One That Handles Lightning and Gales]

Thunder was heard and lightning and storms protected Adenmaha's path. Tae Ho activated his saga once again on top of her as she flew with all her strength.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

The Valkyries gathered. They weren't the fakes, but the real ones. The summoned Valkyries knew what they had to do.

Rasgrid used flight magic.

Reginleif blew the Valkyrie horn.

Gandur and Ingrid led the other Valkyries and protected Adenmaha's sides. They charged towards the evil spirits that were gathering.

Tae Ho lowered his stance and Heda grabbed his waist. Adenmaha flew to an even higher place.

"Go," Odin said.

Embracing Loki's corpse, he looked at the sky and yelled, "Go!"

Idun's warrior, the one that had twisted fate. The one that would stop the promised destruction of the world!

Adenmaha reached her fastest speed. Rasgrid and Reginleif released their magical power without holding back. A storm of magic was generated as the Valkyries gathered in one place released their magical power simultaneously.

Adenmaha looked at the ground.

The world wolf tore the neck of Hraesvelg and the king of the white birds collapsed. The world wolf let out a cry of victory while having become a bloody mess.

[Saga: The warrior That Rode on a Valkyrie]

The saga became stronger. The saga that was strengthened by

Bracky's rune gave new vitality to Tae Ho and Adenmaha.

‘I’m also a Goddess.’

Tae Ho felt like he could hear Adenmaha's grumbling. Adenmaha laughed pleasantly and Tae Ho did the same.

[Saga: Cannon of the Dragon]

Draconic Ballista.

Adenmaha started to descend. No, she became a streak. The arrow of light that was fired from the sky started to charge towards the world wolf.

Tae Ho raised his spear of death. He added the power of death to the pure white spear.

The world wolf raised its head and roared towards the white arrow that was charging at a very fast pace, tearing through space. It tried to push it away with its strong magical power.

[Saga: The One That Conceived a Disaster]

The queen banshee cried out and a magic wall blocked Tae Ho's path.

But it was meaningless. The white arrow broke every obstacle in its path. It tore through space and broke the magic wall!

“Uoooooooo!” Tae Ho roared and at that time the body of Nidhogg that the world wolf thought it was dead bit its leg. It didn't let it escape.

“Tae Ho master!” Nidhogg yelled from far away and Tae Ho answered.

Hraesvelg yelled, “Break it apart!”

He pierced it.

He broke the last wall and the white arrow hit the head of the world wolf!

Light flashed at that moment. An overwhelming magical storm

was generated from the world wolf and swept the surroundings.

The battlefield froze momentarily.

Everyone stopped fighting and looked at the same place.

The remnants of the world wolf scattered randomly and the corpses of the black dragon and king of the white birds lay at its side.

Adenmaha returned to the shape of a Goddess and collapsed. She didn't lose her consciousness because of Idun's blessing but she couldn't even move a finger.

Tae Ho and Heda sat on the ground and raised their heads.

The world wolf had been pulverized and a huge rune storm was being created from its remnants.

But it wasn't the end.

An evil magical power surged up from its remains. The thing that could be described as the essence of the world wolf had released its evilness.

Heda gritted her teeth and extended her hands. She tried to protect herself, Tae Ho and Adenmaha with a golden curtain.

But it wasn't enough. The golden curtain seemed like it would break at any moment. The Valkyries that had helped Adenmaha's flight were surrounded by countless evil spirits and weren't in a position to help Tae Ho's group.

Siri charged forward.

Beings that tried to help or kill however they could started to move.

Tae Ho panted and extended his arms. He used the card that was like a gamble until the last moment against the evil deed that pushed like a wave.

[Saga: The Warrior That Had a Goddess Meet Him]

Someone appeared by crossing the moment the golden barrier broke. She became bewildered at the sudden summoning and couldn't understand immediately what had happened. But at least her reaction to it was fast.

She created a new barrier and her magical curtain was much stronger than Idun's, who was as exhausted as she could be.

It was Goddess of magic, Freya.

The commander of the Valkyries glared at the malice outside of the barrier and the malice of the world wolf hit the curtain roughly. It's soul was about to disappear soon but the power of its curse and its resentment was much stronger than when it was alive.

Cracks started to form on the curtain. Part of it was because the malice of the world wolf was so strong but it was also because the barrier wasn't resilient, as it was made in a hurry.

Freya gritted her teeth as she was driven to a corner. She did her best instead of asking what had happened and Tae Ho pulled a sword by her side.

The fairy god sword, Excalibur.

He didn't grab it alone. Heda accompanied him and inserted her divine power into Excalibur directly.

[Saga: King of Erin]

[Saga: Idun's Warrior]

She poured out all the remaining strength she had without reserve.

A terrible cry burst out. The roar of the malice of the world wolf had finally broken the barrier of Freya.

But right then, Tae Ho and Heda swung the sword they held. They released the power of the fairy god sword, Excalibur.

The light of Erin, the glory of Erin.

The sword shining with Idun's strength!

A flash of golden light surged up. It became the sword of creation and split the sky and the earth and dispersed the malice of the world wolf!

It was flashy.

The world wolf said its last words inside of the breaking light. This time, not even its soul was left and it was annihilated completely under the light of Excalibur.

Tae Ho and Heda panted. They turned to look at each other and kissed. They blessed each other under the happiness of victory.

Freya wore an absent minded expression as she looked at the two of them. She had used strength too suddenly and had almost repelled the malice of the world wolf alone. It was to the point that blood was about to flow down her lips because of that last attack.

But Freya endured it for now as the world wolf had been defeated. She was able to wait for a little bit; for a really short moment.

“Hey! What do you think you are doing!”

Freya yelled and split up Tae Ho and Freya. They didn't have the leisure in the first place. They had defeated the world wolf but the wall had broken. She couldn't ensure the lives of the group when the dogfight started. Freya was certainly someone with strong divine power but she wasn't proficient in battling directly.

But Tae Ho didn't worry about that.

He embraced Adenmaha, who grumbled because he only took care of her now, and made her stand up and glanced towards Freya.

Freya turned to look at that place and understood.

“Tae Ho master!”

Nidhogg yelled from far away. It wasn't a yell of happiness. It was a warning about the disaster that approached from over their

heads.

The giant frost dragon, Balcazar.

It was approaching them. It opened up its mouth and tried to fire a strong breath.

But Tae Ho still didn't worry and the same went for Freya.

Now that the world wolf had disappeared, there was someone that had been freed from his shackles.

There was someone that exploded out in rage.

It was the King of Gods, Odin.

The cruel and sly God of war!

His overwhelming divine power headed to the sky. His strength, that had been suppressed the moment the world wolf was born, got released. It was the first time he had released his real strength in hundreds of years.

The sky and the earth shook. Balcazar was pressed down by an invisible strength and crashed into the ground.

He wasn't the only one. Freya also released her strength. It was a card she had prepared to rescue Odin.

The Rain of Steel.

The structures that were fired from Valhalla flew towards Tae Ho's group. The black trajectory itself became a weapon and charged over while crossing over the evil spirits.

The giant kings sensed their defeat and they chose to save themselves instead of fighting pointlessly. Deserters started to appear.

Tae Ho decided to stab the wedge.

Now that the flow had completely turned over to their side, he decided to spread the news far away in the battlefield.

And there was only one method to do that.

Heda blessed Tae Ho and Idun also did the same. Freya shook her head a few times and then extended her hand instead of blessing him and gave him some of her divine power.

Tae Ho raised Excalibur high to the sky.

The golden light that extended to the sky was the same as always but what happened after that was different.

[Saga: The Goddess of Youth Smiles Under the Golden Apple Tree.]

The golden flash changed in shape. It became an illusion of a huge golden apple tree.

It was an illusion created by Freya's divine power but the light certainly belonged to Idun.

Adenmaha, who was being embraced by Heda, looked at the sky and laughed like a fool. Nidhogg opened her mouth widely while running towards them and Hraesvelg smiled bitterly.

"For Asgard and the nine realms," someone said while looking at the Rain of Steel that was falling down.

Someone else added while looking at the illusion of the golden apple tree.

"For Idun's warrior. For Idun."

The battle hadn't ended yet. They had defeated the magician king and the world wolf but there were still many giant kings remaining in the battlefield. The army of the frost giant king Harmarti was fighting with Asgard's elite forces, which included Thor and Sigurd.

But they forgot about it for a moment. Idun approached Tae Ho under the golden apple tree, which was shining brightly. Heda blessed Tae Ho and he did the same for her. He couldn't endure it anymore and collapsed on her embrace but no one mocked him.

"My warrior Tae Ho," Idun said while holding Tae Ho dearly. Tae

Ho smiled, in a nice mood at her affectionate voice. He closed his eyes under her embrace and let go of his consciousness.

< Episode 45 – King of Erin (2) > End

Episode 46/Chapter 1: Idun's (1)

Two battles were occurring at the time when the sun passed its highest point.

One was in Valhalla.

The armies of Odin and the magician king Utgard Loki clashed head on. It was a bloody battle where neither side planned to delay.

The other battle was occurring at the outskirts of Asgard.

It wasn't excessive to say that the scale of it was a few times bigger than the one occurring in Valhalla.

It was far away from Valhalla but the strongest warriors of Asgard and Jotunheim were there.

The strongest battle God Thor led the warriors of Valhalla. His army wasn't only composed by the God of hunting Ullr or the God of courage Tyr, but it was also formed by the strongest warriors of Valhalla such as Sigurd.

The forces of Jotunheim that they fought against weren't easy either.

The giant king Harmarti, who was called the strongest giant king of Jotunheim and able to stand face to face with Thor, led that battle. His army was composed by several giant kings and strong monsters.

The shape of the battle was opposite to that occurring in Valhalla.

The giants were the attackers in the battle in Valhalla and the warriors of Valhalla fought to stop them.

Contrary to that, the warriors of Valhalla were the attackers in the outskirts of Asgard. They wanted to pierce through the giants and evil spirits surrounding them and open up a path connecting

to Valhalla.

Thor received information about the situation of Valhalla through one of Odin's crows and poured out fiercer attacks than usual.

But Harmarti didn't answer to Thor's heated attacks. He made his defenses more solid instead of facing Thor with all his strength. He just fought to protect.

It was really a battle between a shield and a spear.

So the battle got naturally prolonged. The battle didn't show signs of ending even after the sun passed its highest point.

The dragon slayer Sigurd let out a long sigh. He defeated a monster that had the bloodline of a dragon with his god sword Gram and looked at a distant spot.

Thor was fighting. The sound of thunder shaking the sky and earth never stopped.

Sigurd liked Thor just like most warriors of Valhalla. He respected him deep in his heart.

But Sigurd was a bit different to Thor. If Thor was a hot and huge fire that anyone could recognize, Sigurd was a cold flame. He had a strong love towards the Valkyrie Brynhild but his battles were basically cold.

The battle would be long.

A conclusion wouldn't be made today.

Both sides were exhausting their forces but it was only that. Only the size was shrinking, victory and defeat weren't decided.

Sigurd knew the reason for that.

There were no variables in this battlefield. The battle in the front lines that continued for a hundred years made the two sides know each other too well.

The frost giant king Harmarti was an experienced and outstanding strategist. Just by looking at how strong one was as a warrior, Sigurd would side with Thor but their capabilities for leading an army were different.

Harmarti's capabilities as a commander were higher than Thor's.

And Harmarti fought a battle where he just had to defend. He stopped variables from appearing and made the battle continue normally.

The forces of the magician king attacking the forces of Valhalla.

They were obviously fewer in numbers and in quality from the elite forces Harmarti led but it wasn't a weak army either. You could say that they were a few times stronger than the defending forces of Valhalla.

The giant king Harmarti would buy time for the magician king to make Valhalla sink in.

The strategy of Jotunheim was simple and the army of Thor could only fall for its simplicity.

'We need a variable.'

Something to break the shape of the battlefield. Something to change the situation.

Thor couldn't become a variable and it was the same for Sigurd. The situation would stay the same except that they fought a little better.

Thor also knew of that very well.

And Harmarti obviously knew that too.

A fight without variables.

Sigurd's judgement was correct. No variables occurred from inside. It couldn't happen.

Sigurd held Gram and tried to charge towards the giants once

again.

But right at that moment Sigurd stopped himself. He stopped his momentum and looked at the distant spot once again.

A flock of crows was flying to the spot and it talked in a loud voice as if they wanted to transmit the information to the entire battlefield.

The variable in the outskirts.

The notice that would completely change this situation.

“Idun’s warrior.”

Sigurd said and put a small smile that wasn’t like him.

The battlefield didn’t change that greatly. It was the same from before the crows.

But it would change now. It was unavoidable.

Because the basic structure that decided on the shape of this battlefield had broken.

The magician king had died.

And Valhalla won.

Now, Jotunheim were the ones that would get at a disadvantage if they prolonged the battle.

Thor’s lightning became louder.

And the flow of the battlefield changed.

&

Drive them back!

Odin!

For Asgard and the nine realms!

The giants are fleeing!

Don’t let them escape! Get rid of the giant kings!

Several voices were heard. The roars and battlecries also didn't stop.

Odin was fighting.

He, who got released from the restraints of the world wolf, proved why he was the king of Gods at the same time of being the God of War. He annihilated the giants and evil spirits with his overwhelming divine power and magic.

The giant kings were routed.

They had hidden in Jotunheim the past hundred years and just waited for the opportunity. Now that the situation had become this disadvantageous, they only thought of their own well being.

A messy escape started and the balance of the battlefield crumbled at that moment. The tense battle turned into a one sided massacre.

In addition, the battle between Asgard and Jotunheim was different from the fights between humans in Midgard.

It wasn't a fight between humans but between the ones that wanted to maintain the world and the ones hoping to destroy it. So obviously, concepts like surrendering and taking hostages became more unlikely.

They would kill their enemies.

The simple logic circulated the battlefield.

&

Tae Ho woke from his deep sleep but his eyes didn't open up that easily, maybe because he was still exhausted or he had slept for too long.

So he decided to stay with his eyes closed instead of opening his eyes forcefully.

Unexpectedly, he didn't fall back to sleep again. It was because an interesting story was being told not far away.

“Uh.....so how do we have to call you now?”

“Like usual. Idun and I.....are different people speaking strictly. Freya unnie also used to say that.”

So you are Heda when your hair is red and Idun-nim when your hair is golden?”

They were Adenmaha, Heda, and Nidhogg respectively.

Heda gladly answered Nidhogg’s question.

“That’s right, you could say that.”

Because that was the most eye catching difference.

“So, is that eye cover something like a key?”

Adenmaha asked while fixing her language a bit. She was using words she used when she spoke to a close sister of hers like she usually did with Heda.

“Yes, Idun will wake up if I wear this. Actually, there’s no need to do that right now.....but should I call it a kind of change in consciousness? It’s also a relic left behind by my mother.”

Heda’s voice changed to become a bit bitter. Nidhogg embraced that Heda and mumbled in a depressed voice.

“Heda is pretty. I like Idun-nim. But it’s really despairing. One is hard enough but two of them got combined. This isn’t fair.....”

For Heda and Idun to be one person. She didn’t think she could win when she was only one person but what was she supposed to do when two of them became one?

Heda laughed bitterly at Nidhogg’s despair. Adenmaha also laughed the same way and raised her hand and asked.

“Ah, can I ask you one thing?”

“Yes, whatever.”

“Uh.....how did you do it then?”

“Do what?”

“Well, master was usually with Heda when he entered the shrine. So did you hurriedly turn around and enter it from the back when master entered it?”

Heda flinched at Adenmaha’s question and then flushed. She nodded really slowly.

“Ye, yes.”

“Wow, really? And you transformed into Idun-nim in that time?”

“Ye, yes.”

She would enter the shrine from behind while Tae Ho entered the door and transform into Idun while Tae Ho walked inside.

She forcefully calmed down her breathing in front of Tae Ho and act calm. Just as nothing had happened ever.

Adenmaha imagined that and bursted out of laughter and Tae Ho did the same.

“Tae Ho master!”

Nidhogg raised her ear and moved from Heda’s embrace to Tae Ho’s. She hugged him and put a bright smile.

But it was short. Heda grabbed Nidhogg’s back of the neck like moving a kitten and moved her to a side. She opened her eyes sharply and said while looking at Tae Ho.

“So this was the case. You were already awake but were eavesdropping on a girl’s conversation. I see.”

It was cold but Tae Ho already knew everything about Heda. He could know how she was feeling even without using the ‘eyes of the dragon’.

‘She’s embarrassed’.

So she’s acting that way to appease herself.

Tae Ho smirked and spoke with a calm voice instead of being

bewildered.

“I only heard a part. From now on I will walk a bit slower when I enter the shrine.”

Heda's face reddened more and because of that Tae Ho received the light beating that came up next with a humble feeling.

After receiving about three hits from her.

Adenmaha calmed down Heda and grabbed Nidhogg who was still waiting to get embraced by Tae Ho.

“Nidhogg, master needs to relax. He has to rest a bit more so lets talk with him later. And the blessing can also come for later.”

“Yes....I will hold back.”

Nidhogg nodded with a depressed face. Adenmaha stroke her head a few times and spoke to Heda.

“Don't you also have to go by now?”

There would be many people looking for the Goddess of life now that there were countless injured people. She had only made some of her time to check Tae Ho's state but she was as busy as she could be now that the battle ended.

“Mm, that is indeed the case.”

It seemed like Heda wanted to say something more but Adenmaha didn't allow it. She nodded and interrupted her and then turned to look at Tae Ho.

“Master, the battle ended well. We also suffered great damage but we still ended up winning. About more than a day passed since the battle and it's night currently. A conference is going to be held tomorrow morning so you can rest until then. If you are hungry or need something tell me now and if you think of eating at a later time ring that bell over there. You can also use the summoning rock. Ah, you know that you have to call me instead of Nidhogg right?”

“Ye, yeah.”

Tae Ho gave out a sloppy answer at the rain of words. Nidhogg mumbled from a side.

“You can call Nidhogg.....”

“You don’t know how to cook.”

Nidhogg sulked out at the simple yet heavy fact and dropped her shoulders. Adenmaha giggled because she was too cute and continued speaking.

“Fine, Rolo and McLaren got some internal injuries but it’s nothing you should worry about. Siri and Bracky are also safe. Are you worried about anyone else?”

“What about Freya-nim? And the Valkyries?”

The eyes of Heda and Adenmaha became cold. For him to name Freya and the Valkyries first.

But it was only for a moment. It was obvious that Tae Ho worried about them.

“They did get injured but no one died. Freya-nim is really fresh.”

Tae Ho got satisfied at Adenmaha’s concise answer but getting to the point. Heda touched Tae Ho’s cheek as he dropped his body unconsciously.

“You are really tired. Rest a bit more. Let’s speak later.”

He had defeated the magician king and the world wolf. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that Tae Ho had spent everything he had in a mere ten minutes.

Tae Ho agreed. If it wasn’t for Idun’s blessing, he wouldn’t be awake right now.

“Let Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

Heda gave Tae Ho the best blessing.

Nidhogg struggled from the back saying ‘me too, me too’ but it

wasn't possible. Heda took Nidhogg and got out of the room while smiling brightly.

“She doesn't have any openings.”

Adenmaha spoke while smiling bitterly and then told Tae Ho to rest one more time and followed Nidhogg's back.

The room turned silent after the three people left. Cuchulainn was also silent, probably because he aided him with a lot of strength when executing the attack with Gae Bolg.

Tae Ho continued watching the room where the three people left and then looked up at the ceiling. He closed his eyes lightly and let out a long sigh.

“We won.”

They had won.

Tae Ho smiled and then fell in a deep slumber.

&

“So you woke up.”

< Episode 46 – Idun's (1) > End

Episode 46/Chapter 2: Idun's (2)

“So you woke up.”

A voice was heard even before he opened his eyes. Tae Ho opened them slowly and then blinked a few times. He felt refreshed, as if he had slept a sweet sleep; relaxed, with no exhaustion.

Because of that, Tae Ho could reply to the voice almost instantly.

“Master Ragnar,” he said.

‘I know that you are disappointed, as a man is the one that greets you as soon as you open up your eyes. It’s definitely written in your face.’

Cuchulainn’s voice was heard as well. Tae Ho laughed unconsciously and then faced Ragnar, who was sitting on a chair in front of him.

“You were safe.”

Ragnar was his usual self; he didn’t seem injured at all.

He smiled bitterly and shrugged his shoulders.

“Well, I had the role of a commander inside the fortress. I’m glad that you are safe. You were out for three nights already.”

“Three nights?”

‘Two days have already passed since you woke up for a brief moment. They didn’t worry too much as you were sleeping too well, so don’t worry.’

Tae Ho heard Cuchulainn’s explanation and turned to look at himself. It did feel like he had slept for a long time but for it to be that long...

‘My exhaustion and magical power had reached its bottom. In addition, the limit had increased because of the runes I absorbed, so it would obviously take time for it to be filled once again.’

Viewing it with a game-like view, it meant that it took more time for his increased HP to recover again.

“You did well anyways. I knew that you would become great but for you to become one this fast...”

Ragnar wore a sincerely admiring expression, before becoming serious. Then he fixed his sitting posture and placed his hand on his chest.

“I thank you, Idun’s warrior, as a warrior of Valhalla. You have rescued Valhalla, Asgard.”

It was the thanks of none other than the Viking king, Ragnar Lodbrok.

Tae Ho already knew Ragnar very well but he couldn’t help but feel moved. No, it was even more so, as they knew each other very well.

‘Hey, at this point shouldn’t you say something like ‘it’s thanks to Cuchulainn-nim having lead someone. It wasn’t by my strength alone’?’

Cuchulainn cracked a joke to make him relax. Tae Ho agreed to that and so also expressed etiquette.

“It was thanks to everyone in Valhalla,” he replied.

That was indeed the case.

The reason he was able to defeat the magician king was thanks to Loki’s sacrifice.

If Loki hadn’t inflicted a lethal wound on him, Tae Ho would have been the one to get done by.

It was the same for the world wolf. If it wasn’t for Nidhogg and Hraesvelgr, and if he hadn’t had Rolo’s and Adenmaha’s help, he wouldn’t have been able to defeat it.

Ragnar also knew that fact, but he still shook his head.

“But still, you were the pivot. It would have been impossible without you. In the end you are the one that turned Nidhogg and Hraesvelgr into allies and you were the one that rescued Odin-nim. You are also the one that defeated the magician king and the world wolf. Those were things that could be accomplished, because it was you.”

Would another warrior be able to do the same thing Tae Ho did? He wouldn't. Those were miracles only Tae Ho could have made.

“At least Sigurd...”

“Yes?”

“Well, my eyes really are accurate,” Ragnar said, laughing.

Tae Ho didn't know what he was talking about but he looked at Ragnar, who was satisfied, and said with a bit of eagerness and caution, “Don't become like Cuchulainn, please.”

‘What are you talking about? Huh?’

Tae Ho remained silent and Ragnar continued to speak.

“Well, isn't there anything you are curious about now that you are awake? There's still some time so I will answer your questions. Aren't you hungry?”

“Uh... I'm fine for now. I do want to eat something but I do feel fulfilled.”

It was a bit weird, but he really did feel like that. Ragnar nodded.

“You should be, because you ate golden apples while you were sleeping. Heda and Adenmaha gave you liquefied golden apples two times a day.”

“Wow, I'm such an honoured guest.”

It was because he ate golden apples two times a day. It was a treatment that not even normal Gods could receive.

“What would anyone say, even if they give you a whole bunch?

You are none other than Idun's warrior."

It was also thanks to Idun, who had strongly claimed that there was no problem with using her apples however she wanted.

"Mm, let's leave the meal for later... but what did you mean by you still having some time?" asked Tae Ho, tilting his head.

Ragnar put on a nice smile and answered, "Odin has called for you. Everyone expected that you would be waking up today. He will probably speak about what reward to give."

'I'm curious about what reward he has prepared.'

Odin had told Tae Ho that everytime he made an accomplishment that he would give a big reward when the thing going on in Valhalla was organized.

Cuchulainn was as curious as Tae Ho but he would know about it only when he met him. Because of that, he decided to ask about other things.

"Master Ragnar, what is the situation of the battle?"

For now, the battle in Valhalla was a huge victory. Thanks to the magician king and the world wolf having died, the giant kings started to flee and the formation of the giants became a mess.

Tae Ho had lost consciousness after he defeated the world wolf but the battle on that day continued for half a day. It was an obvious result as it was a battle that had involved hundreds of thousands of warriors.

"The giants that escaped scattered everywhere but most of them headed to the north, where Harmarti is at. They had to do that in order to escape to Jotunheim."

Ragnar moved his hands in the air as if there was an invisible map in the air while he explained. Compared to before, Tae Ho now had Asgard's general outline in his head so a picture of it was naturally drawn in his head.

“The army, which is currently led by Heimdall, is chasing after the remaining forces. Odin is planning to gather the forces of Valhalla to defeat the army of Harmarti. They will be driving away the giants from Asgard completely.”

The battle in Valhalla ended but the Great War itself hadn't. Tae Ho nodded.

“We won't be able to lower our guards. It can be said that the main force of the giants resides in Harmarti.”

Strictly speaking, the army of the magician king was a detached force meant to attack Valhalla. But of course, the size and strength of it was too strong to say that it was a detached force.

“Right, but our main forces are also over there. In addition, the hegemony has passed over to Valhalla now that the army of the magician king broke up. The frost giant king would also be thinking about how to retreat while taking all the forces he could.”

The balance of strength broke with the collapse of the army of the magician king. The army of Harmarti would only be able to fall back.

“Reaching a complete conclusion won't be easy.”

“The damages Valhalla suffered are too big. Actually, we accomplished great victory in his battle but too much blood has been shed. It will be impossible to counterattack in Jotunheim instantly.”

Tae Ho didn't know of it but the god of sea, Njord, had suffered a big injury. In addition, there were too many dead warriors and Valkyries. Almost a fourth of the Steel warriors residing in Valhalla had been destroyed.

“Well, whatever the case it's clear that we were the ones that won, so you don't have to worry too much. It seems like they came.”

Ragnar changed the subject in the last sentence and turned to

look away. Tae Ho looked in that direction as well and footsteps were heard from the door.

“Are you awake, master?”

“Tae Ho master!”

It was Adenmaha and Nidhogg. Contrary to Adenmaha, who entered the room calmly, Nidhogg smiled as brightly as a puppy meeting her owner in a long time and embraced Tae Ho.

“Heda is not here. This is the moment. This is the only opportunity.”

Nidhogg rubbed her cheek on Tae Ho’s chest, as if she really missed it. But it couldn’t last long either.

“Heda is not here but I am.”

Adenmaha spoke and Nidhogg flinched. But she still embraced him more tightly, as if she wouldn’t be able to step away.

Adenmaha shook her head as if she couldn’t do anything and Tae Ho laughed at that. He stroke Nidhogg’s head and said, “Nidhogg, I’m really grateful. You did really well. You are the best.”

“Ehehe, hehe. Keep complimenting me.”

“You fought well and endured it well. Everyone should be grateful towards you. I’m also grateful.”

He was being sincere. Nidhogg had fought really well. It wasn’t an exaggeration to say that he was able to defeat the World Wolf thanks to Nidhogg’s battle.

Nidhogg smiled foolishly, her face red. Adenmaha pouted at the look of overflowing happiness.

“Don’t you have anything to say to me?”

“I’m also grateful to you. I’m always thankful. You really are the best.”

“Hmph, you always say that everything is the best.”

Adenmaha snorted like always but it seemed like she was in a good mood.

‘Nidhogg is also cute today.’

Cuchulainn spoke with a really loose voice. Ragnar opened his mouth once again while Tae Ho agreed with him.

“It seems like it’s time. Adenmaha, I will borrow Tae Ho for a moment.”

“You are going to meet Odin-nim right? I will be waiting for you at Idun’s sanctum.”

“Idun’s sanctum?”

The one that asked was Tae Ho. Adenmaha nodded and explained.

“The residence broke in pieces. We are currently using Idun-nim’s sanctum, which is inside of Valhalla, as the temporary base for the legion.”

When the seal of Valhalla broke, Freya gave up on the part of the lake of fog where the residences were at. It was because she already had enough to do with just protecting Valhalla.

Odin had also agreed that Freya’s judgement was logical so they had left the lake of fog alone and thanks to that, the lake of fog could only become part of the battlefield.

“Actually, this bedroom is inside Freya-nim’s sanctum. Idun-nim also collapsed after the battle... so Freya-nim said that she would move you to her sanctum for now.”

“Indeed.”

‘Freya-nim still takes care of you and Heda quite well.’

‘I’m always grateful to her. It’s the same for this battle.’

At the last moment, she had also acted as an outstanding shield.

“Anyways, let’s leave now. Odin shall be waiting for us,” Ragnar

said.

Tae Ho stood up while still holding the regretful Nidhogg.

&

The place they were lead to by Ragnar was a small room instead of a big hall. There were three people waiting in this room and they were, respectively, Odin, Freya and Idun.

Odin and Freya were seated higher up and Idun was standing in the entrance.

Tae Ho shared a short greeting with Idun and then expressed etiquette in front of Odin.

“The commander of Idun greets you.”

“Leave the solid etiquette. It’s an unofficial place, so act comfortably, like usual.”

Tae Ho and Odin had spoken comfortably while climbing the world tree. It wasn’t really a comfortable relationship but didn’t they have a relationship in which they had to share hard etiquette.

Tae Ho adopted comfortable posture after thanking him for his consideration and Odin opened his mouth again.

“It’s a conventionality but... you have also achieved great merits this time. I thank you as the highest God of Asgard.”

He was seated but Odin expressed etiquette politely. Tae Ho also replied to the highest God.

“Thank you.”

It was short and awkward, but he couldn’t think of other words besides those. Odin smiled, in a good mood, and then buried his body in his seat.

The previously silent Freya spoke.

“You heard the general outline of the situation from Ragnar, right?”

“Yes, I heard that you were preparing to fight against Harmarti.”

“That’s right, Thor’s army is already fighting him and Odin will also head to the north after this conversation ends.”

Freya spoke kindly, like when she spoke with Idun. She always spoke in a stiff way at the times when they met previously so you could say that it was quite a big change.

“I’m sorry to say that we will have to delay the official award granting.”

“It’s fine.”

Tae Ho answered hurriedly at Odin’s apology.

Freya snickered and added, “There’s no need for you to participate in this battle. It will become a big battle... but it’s not like Valhalla’s fate lies in it. I recommend that you rest in the rear. In addition, this is a claim made by Idun.”

Freya looked at the silent Idun. Idun, who was wearing her eye covering, smacked her lips and said in a low voice, “Didn’t you do enough?”

He had raised the biggest merits and suffered much.

Idun’s recommendation to Tae Ho was to rest, rather than go to the battlefield once again.

“I understand. I will do that.”

The Goddess of his legion was this concerned about him, so how could he go out to fight?

Idun was satisfied at Tae Ho’s answer and smiled.

“Then, let’s return to the topic of the award. Freya?”

Freya met Odin’s gaze and then nodded and spoke with an elegant yet playful expression.

“We have been thinking of several things, but what about this? I will let you marry Idun formally.”

Tae Ho and Idun were simultaneously bewildered at the sudden proposal. But Freya didn't stop. She continued speaking.

"It's Midgard's common sense for the knight that defeated the black dragon and rescued the princess to marry her right? How about it? It's not bad right?"

"Wait!" Idun yelled sharply.

She interrupted Freya's words immediately and yelled in an angry voice, "No, how is that an award? We can ju, just marry ourselves later. Isn't, isn't that right? My, my warrior Tae Ho? Right?"

She had started yelling in an angry voice but her voice sunk the more she spoke.

Idun glanced at Tae Ho with a completely red face and Tae Ho became bewildered once again. He opened his mouth with difficulty.

"P, probably?"

They just had to marry, just as Idun had said.

'But aren't Heda and Idun-nim two different people?'

Heda had said that it was like having two souls in a single body.

Idun was embarrassed, but it seemed like she was quite satisfied at Tae Ho's answer. The corner of her lips kept curling upwards.

"Tch, not biting it. I wondered if I could just get over it."

Freya clicked her tongue and spoke and because of that Idun became aware of herself and yelled, "Freya unnie!"

'Hey, just say that you want to marry Freya-nim. Won't it be an award then?'

Cuchulainn didn't discern time and place and so butted in. Idun continued speaking while Tae Ho cleared his throat.

"Anyways! Give us a proper award and don't try to look for a free

ride!”

She had to take Tae Ho’s share properly. Freya pouted as Idun showed a solid resolution and Odin laughed and said, “Idun’s warrior. Just like it was proved in this battle, you are... the successor of Erin. That’s why it’s proper to return these to you.”

Odin paused for a moment and spread his hands. Then, a huge illusion of a treasure vault appeared on his palm.

“I will hand over the treasures of Erin that Asgard is in possession of. And... I will give a part of Asgard to you so that Erin can rebuild itself once again. That land will be treated as Erin even if it’s inside of Asgard and you will become the owner of that land. No one will be able to surpass your authority in that place.”

It wasn’t simply handing over a piece of land. He was saying that he would make a small Erin inside of Asgard.

In addition, Odin had used the expression that no one would be able to surpass his authority in that place. That meant that the authority of the king of Erin, which was inside of Asgard, would be on equal grounds with him.

“Thank you.”

He answered shortly but there was gratefulness at the exceptional treatment. Odin nodded and said, “I will tell you the land candidates when the situation calms down a little. I will also hand over the treasures stored in the treasure vault soon.”

“Please understand, even if it takes a while. Everyone is busy with the clearance,” Freya added.

Idun stepped forward and butted in while Tae Ho answered affirmatively.

“But Freya unnie. Don’t you have something else besides the land and treasure vault? The land is one thing but it’s obvious for the treasures of Erin to return to the successor.”

That was indeed the case, if it was looked at from another perspective.

Now that Asgard had recognized Erin's authority, the treasures of Erin weren't artifacts without an owner anymore. They belonged to the successor of Erin Tae Ho.

It belonged to Tae Ho in the first place but to say that it was a prize... It wasn't improper at all.

"Look at you. Aren't you too much?"

Freya spoke with a dumbfounded face. Idun's words were true, looking at logic, but that was only when looking at logic.

Realistically speaking, the treasures had already entered Asgard's hands. They were giving those away so how was that no award?

But Idun still shook her head...

"What are you speaking about? It's an obvious right. If Tae Ho wasn't here Valhalla would have collapsed already. You also admit that, right?"

'Right! So tell her that you want to marry Freya-nim!'

Cuchulainn's intrusion was as sudden and sharp as always. Tae Ho barely forced down the cough that was about to come out and Idun and Freya stared at each other. In the end, Freya gave up first and clicked her tongue while dropping her shoulders.

"Tch, can't do anything then. Do you have anything else that you want?"

She asked Tae Ho, instead of Idun. Odin added as he didn't answer immediately, "Idun's warrior, you can think about it slowly. You shouldn't feel troubled when you are the one receiving the award."

It was a benign voice but Freya grumbled once again.

"No, Odin. How much are you planning on giving him? You didn't forget that I'm the one doing the housekeeping, right?"

“How could I. But don’t you also know well that there are times that you should save your pocket and times that you shouldn’t?”

“Well, that’s right.”

Just like Idun had said, if it hadn’t been for Tae Ho, Valhalla and Asgard would have been destroyed. It didn’t make sense to save treasures from the savior.

“Fine, I put my mind on this. I will pick about 20 of the prettiest and nicest girls in the Valkyrie training center and send them to your legion. You like it, right?”

Freya smiled gently. It seemed like it was to tease them, rather than being the actual award.

“I don’t like it one bit.”

Idun had replied as expected. Freya shrugged her shoulders.

“You don’t know if your warrior may like it or not.”

‘Well, this Tae Ho bastard would certainly like it.’

Idun turned to look at Tae Ho while Cuchulainn agreed. Tae Ho put a smile, to tell her not to worry and spoke to Freya.

“I’m fine for now. Rather than sending them all at once... I think that it would be good to send them based on the speed that the number of warriors in the legion increases. It would be good if you gave me the right to select the Valkyries first. You said that they would be twenty so I will be waiting for them.”

It meant that the 20 best graduates of the Valkyrie training center would all be monopolized for a period of time.

Of course, the will of the Valkyrie herself was more important but the recognition of Idun’s legion had surged up to the sky with the recent events. Normal Valkyries wouldn’t deny the proposal to enter Idun’s legion.

“You really are meant for each other.”

‘Right. How did you interpret that so you only take the benefits?’

Freya and Cuchulainn admired them and Idun broadened her shoulders and said, “My warrior is excellent.”

It was too cute to see her proudly boast.

Freya ended up giggling and Odin also laughed at that.

“It’s been quite a pleasing conversation but we will have to end it here. It was nice to see you even if it was for a moment. Idun’s warrior. Think of your award until the official award place.”

“I will do so.”

“The ceremony of being promoted to the top rank will take place in no time. You don’t need me explaining about it right? ...As you already have good teachers,” Freya added and looked at Ragnar, who was in a corner.

Odin also spoke to Ragnar.

“Ragnar, I will also entrust the general explanation about ‘that’. I will tell him the details myself later but Idun’s warrior also has to know the general details.”

“I understand.”

Tae Ho was curious about what ‘that’ was but he held himself back. He would be able to hear it later in the explanation anyways.

“Then, I will be waiting for the day we meet again.”

Odin laughed and lightly hit his chest with his fist.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

The short talk with Odin came to an end.

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‘So, when are you going to have the ceremony?’

< Episode 46 – Idun’s (2) > End

Episode 46/Chapter 3: Idun's (3)

‘So when are you going to have the ceremony?’

As soon as they left the room, Cuchulainn asked in a quiet voice. Tae Ho flinched at that surprise attack and asked back unconsciously.

‘W, wedding?’

‘No, the ceremony for the top rank warrior. Ah, so that was the case. Tae Ho wanted to marry Idun-nim hurriedly. So that was the case.’

Cuchulainn laughed as if it had turned out according to his plan and imitated Heda. It seemed like he used the vague word on purpose to tease him.

Tae Ho let out a sigh inwardly at his prank and then Idun opened her mouth carefully.

“Uh, um. M, my warrior Tae Ho.”

She stuttered. Her cheeks under her eye cover were still red.

Tae Ho also got nervous like her and turned to look at her while flinching and Idun slightly evaded his eyes and spoke.

“I, I will have to go first.”

“Uh.....uh, yes. Okay.”

‘The two of you went so haywire.’

Cuchulainn's interpretation was correct. Idun stuttered once again.

“Uh, yeah. A, and....”

And also indecisive.

She smacked her lips a few times and then shook her head and spoke with a low tone.

“Let’s speak later. Ye, yes. Later at the sanctum. Anyways, later. Kyak!”

She, who was walking while speaking ambiguously, was about to fall on the plain ground. Tae Ho was perplexed because he thought he saw this scene before and Idun who was more bewildered than him said quickly.

“I’m, I’m fine. I’m fine so don’t worry. I am fine indeed. Ye, yes.”

Idun waved her hand and then started to rush away. Thinking about it, it seemed like it was the first time he saw Idun walking that way.

Ragnar shook his head with a sigh as Tae Ho was looking at Idun’s back getting farther away with a dumbfounded face.

“I don’t know what kind of expression I should put on at times like these.”

‘Just think that you can laugh.’

Unfortunately, Cuchulainn’s voice didn’t reach Ragnar. Ragnar let out a few more sighs and then turned to look at the still perplexed Tae Ho.

“Tae Ho, take some breaths for now. Inhale at one and exhale at two.”

Ragnar gave some orders to him.

Whatever the case, Tae Ho’s expression turned much better after breathing. His excited face also returned to normal.

“Did you calm down?”

“Yes.”

For now.

Ragnar frowned at Tae Ho’s answer but he didn’t say anything else as it seemed impossible to make him calm down any further. So he brought out a completely different subject.

“Fine, I have to explain many things to you.....the conversation will likely be long so do you want to go to another place first?”

“Another place?”

“Compared to you, your allies will be participating in the next battle. Today is the day if you want to see their faces since they will be departing tomorrow.”

He was talking about Siri, Bracky and the Valkyries that had a deep relationship with him.

“Then I will see Siri and Bracky first.”

He had heard that the two of them were safe from Adenmaha but he would be at ease only when he saw them directly.

“Right, then I will go to Idun’s sanctum first. See you later.”

Ragnar patted on Tae Ho’s shoulders lightly and walked away in the opposite direction Idun had. Tae Ho calmed down himself and Cuchulainn asked him.

‘But hey. Do you know where the guys are at?’

“I can just ask.”

Tae Ho took out a summoning rock from the air.

“Adenmaha.”

“Lullaby~ And good night~ in the skies stars are bright~ master?”

Adenmaha, who was humming in a low voice, was surprised and turned around to look at Tae Ho.

Adenmaha was summoned in a sitting position as if she was sitting somewhere before being summoned so Tae Ho hurriedly grabbed her and then asked.

“Uh....a lullaby?”

The reason he was surprised was because he was seeing Adenmaha sing for the first time.

It seemed like she was singing a lullaby judging by her humming sound, the melody and the lyrics.

Adenmaha flushed at Tae Ho's question and then answered while pouting.

"I was putting down Nidhogg to take her nap."

"You also sing lullabies?"

Tae Ho blinked once again and asked. It was surprising for Adenmaha to take care of Nidhogg's nap and more so for her to also sing a lullaby.

"No, well.....I can do it for her why are you acting that way?"

Adenmaha spoke with a quite prim air. It seemed like it was to hide her embarrassment.

Cuchulainn put on a warm smile at that.

'How nice, nice. She's a real sucker.'

'How is that related to each other?'

'I don't know. Anyways, she's nice. Really nice. But doesn't she have to return quickly if she was putting her to sleep? Nidhogg should be confused now.'

It was quite understandable. He could imagine Nidhogg's teary face.

It seemed like Adenmaha also thought of the same thing as she spoke before Tae Ho could even ask.

"Don't worry about Nidhogg. She always pesters me to sing a lullaby everyday but she falls asleep even before I finish some verses. I was just finishing the song so she must be deep asleep by now."

"I'm glad then."

Tae Ho also knew that Nidhogg was the type that fell asleep as soon as she lied down. She may be in another world by now just as

Adenmaha had said.

“Anyways, what happened? Did you finish speaking with Odinnim? What did he say he would give you as an award?”

Adenmaha’s eyes that requested for more awards became the same as Idun’s. Tae Ho smiled bitterly and said.

“We didn’t finish speaking completely. I will tell you the details later as I also have to debate it with you anyways.”

“Debate?”

“He told me to think about what I want. But what he promised me for now.....”

“20 Valkyries?!”

Adenmaha opened her eyes sharply and raised her voice. Tae Ho was currently holding Gae Bolg in his hands even though he had no memory of grabbing it so he was certain it was Cuchulainn’s doing.

‘What? It’s true.’

Cuchulainn spoke shamelessly and Tae Ho explained quickly.

“We will be getting the top 20 graduates. But what’s more important than that is the land and the treasures.”

The land to set up Erin and the treasures of Erin.

Adenmaha finished listening to Tae Ho’s explanation and then opened her eyes roundly and was happy.

“Wow, they are giving more on top of that? Well, you did accomplish a great merit. Yes, right. You have plenty of rights. Yes yes.”

Her getting excited and boasting as if it was her own doing was exactly the same as a certain someone.

‘She’s so similar to Idun-nim.’

Cuchulainn’s words were certain as usual. It was indeed the insight that came from Scathach’s style techniques.

“Erin.....Merlin will like it. Scathach too.”

A warm smile spread on Adenmaha's face. Tae Ho felt warm at that smile and asked.

“Adenmaha, what about you?”

“I also like it. I think that you keep forgetting this but I'm also a Goddess of Erin.”

“Yes, anyways, let's speak the details at a later time.”

“Anyways.....you really lack delicateness. So what is the reason you called me anyways?”

Adenmaha also asked using the word anyways. Tae Ho put back the summoning rock and then revealed the reason he called Adenmaha.

“Do you know where Siri and Bracky are at? And the Valkyries of the other legions. I want to see them before they depart.”

Adenmaha pouted when he said that he wanted to see the Valkyries but she started to think back and remember.

“Siri and Bracky should be resting at the conference room by now.... and the other Valkyries may be at the sanctums of their respective legions. Ah, also.....”

“Also?”

“Mm, don't get surprised when you hear this. The other Valkyries.....so to say Rasgrid, Reginleif and Gandur are well but actually Ingrid suffered some injuries. They're not too severe so don't worry. This is why I'm telling you not to be surprised...”

Adenmaha frowned and let out a sigh but Tae Ho asked quickly while opening his eyes widely.

“She's fine, right?”

“She's not as it is an injury, but it isn't threatening to her life at all. I know that she's resting at the sanctum of her legion so calm

down.”

“Right. Let’s go meet Ingrid first then.”

The usually calm and sincere Ingrid.

She seemed to be hard on people but that was because she wasn’t skilled at dealing with people. She was really a gentle Valkyrie.

Tae Ho still worried about her even though he had heard that her life wasn’t in danger. He wanted to check how she was doing as soon as he could.

But Adenmaha stopped Tae Ho.

“Siri and Bracky should be on the way so you should go see them first. Just like I told you before, her life isn’t in danger so calm down. You know what I mean right?”

“I understand.”

“Fine. Let’s move then. Follow me.”

Adenmaha grabbed Tae Ho’s arm naturally and started to lead the way.

&

“Ohh, Idun’s warrior!”

“Idun’s warrior!”

“The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him!”

“The warrior that rides on Valkyries!”

“Giant slayer!”

“The one that defeated the magician king!”

“The calamity of the World Wolf!”

“The Valkyrie Master!”

Those were the voices that were heard from the surroundings as Tae Ho entered the conference room.

Their yells were so loud it shook the entire conference room and Cuchulainn mumbled with a sick voice.

‘The warriors of Valhalla really like to make nicknames.’

It was at that moment that a huge man that was a head bigger than the others approached Tae Ho.

“Tae Ho!”

“Bracky! Siri!”

Tae Ho smiled brightly and said. Bracky and Siri were also putting on the same bright face.

“Let’s hug for now.”

Bracky gave a fierce hug to Tae Ho suddenly. Tae Ho experienced that his body was getting crushed and then hugged Bracky back.

“I’m glad you are safe.”

“I’m also glad that you are safe.”

Tae Ho’s hug was filled with emotions compared to Bracky’s hug. Bracky saw Tae Ho and Siri hugging each other and then slightly pulled on Tae Ho’s shoulders and asked.

“I heard that you passed out and couldn’t wake up but will you also be participating?”

“No, I’m going to rest this time. I’m sorry.”

“Why be sorry? It’s also time for you to rest. No, you should rest a few more times. Only then will I be able to catch up to you.”

Bracky was much stronger than Tae Ho when they were at the lowest rank. But Tae Ho had become a lot stronger in no time.

But thinking about it, Bracky and Siri were also amazing as they were catching up to him.

“You became strong.”

Tae Ho was amazed after he looked at Bracky and Siri with his

‘eyes of the dragon’. The two of them had accumulated twice the runes they had since he saw them in Midgard.

“We fought with strong enemies. But of course, it isn’t be as much as you.”

The two of them had fought against giant kings but still, they couldn’t be compared to Tae Ho who had fought against the magician king and the World Wolf.

“You will become superior ranked warriors, right?”

“It’s not enough but.....I think that we will become soon. Then, you will become a top ranked warrior?”

“Probably.”

Tae Ho smirked and answered Siri’s question. Bracky laughed once again and then spoke while embracing Siri by her shoulders.

“You are the pride of our knight. Right Siri?”

“I’m not yours. It seems like you keep forgetting this but I’m your senior by a lot.”

Siri glanced at him and surprisingly enough, she didn’t push away Bracky’s hands.

Tae Ho opened his eyes sharply and Cuchulainn laughed wickedly. Meanwhile, Bracky leaned his face close to Siri’s and said.

“Ey, what meaning does that have between us?”

It was a vague voice. Siri put on an expression as she didn’t like it but it didn’t seem like she really disliked him.

‘What an estimation.’

Cuchulainn said and Tae Ho agreed to his words. Adenmaha’s eyes also shone.

“The two of you.....”

“Huhuhu, you noticed? Did you notice?”

Bracky spoke triumphantly. Siri let out a sigh but then put a smile as if she couldn't do anything about it.

Not being negative but positive.

Tae Ho asked hurriedly while his interest peaked up.

“When did it become like this?”

“Huhuhu....that is when he got dispatched to Mdigard. When Odin disappeared and everything fell in chaos....we, that overcame all kinds of dangers, becoming closer every time. But one day, when the rain fell down heavily.....ack!”

Bracky, who was having fun talking, leaned over and grabbed his shin. Siri punched Bracky in the stomach after making him lower his body by kicking him in the shin and said with a sigh.

“Let's say that what happened that day was certainly a mistake.”

‘Hey, ask if it happened that day or at night. Hurry.’

It was the stubborn Cuchulainn.

And in the other side, Bracky spoke in a tricky voice as if he didn't receive any damage.

“Hey, don't be shy....ugh!”

He got hit one more time. It seemed like he got hit properly and couldn't utter a word.

And after some time passed.

Time flowed really quickly because it was fun just to be with them.

“Captain Siri, have a safe trip. Don't over do it. And if possible take care of Bracky too.”

“I told you to not call me capt.....right, let's meet at the promotion ceremony.”

For Tae Ho, captain Siri was none other than a nickname.

Tae Ho shared a hug with Siri and then turned to look at Bracky.

“You too, have a safe trip. I will entrust captain Siri to you.”

“Don’t worry. It may be impossible to protect the tip of her hair but I won’t let her get hurt.”

Tae Ho also shared a hug with Bracky and then left the conference room. Then, Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and spoke.

‘Poor Rolph. You don’t even ask about him anymore. He could also be considered as a comrade.’

‘Ah, now that you mention him.’

He had completely forgotten about him. Rolph must have also participated in this battle. Nothing would have happened, right?

‘Well, he should be safe. Siri would definitely have told you if something did happen. Anyways, she said that she thought about him as her younger brother. Um, younger brother. He’s somewhat poor.’

‘But he’s still handsome. He will get a new relation.’

Tae Ho finished speaking to Cuchulainn and walked away to meet with Ingrid.

“Commander-nim?”

“It’s a meeting.”

Tae Ho went to the injured ward as soon as he entered Njord’s sanctum and smirked. It seemed like Ingrid was receiving quite good treatment since she was given a one man room.

“Thank you for visiting me.”

“Ey, I told you not to use formal language in informal occasions.”

Ingrid rose up with difficulty and Tae Ho helped her raise herself.

Ingrid sat up with difficulty and then spoke while laughing after hesitating for a bit.

“I’m glad to see you safe.”

“Me too. Do you know how surprised I was when I heard that you got injured?”

“I will get better after I rest a bit.”

“You should. And here.”

She had bandages wrapped all over her body but it seemed like the problem was internal rather than external. Because of that, Tae Ho took out something he had saved.

“Uh, that’s....”

“Take it. No, eat it. It’s a piece anyways. Don’t feel troubled by it.”

A piece of a golden apple. It was one of the many Idun had prepared for the fight against the magician king.

It was a piece but still it wasn’t something a Valkyrie could eat easily. Ingrid hesitated for a moment and then smiled faintly.

“Thank you. I will eat it gratefully.”

“If you are grateful, recover completely.”

“Alright.”

It was a bit stiff but her smile was warm as usual.

And after some time passed.

“Let Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

“Let Njord’s blessing accompany you.”

They blessed each other in their foreheads and put smiled at the same time.

&

“It seems like you had many places to visit.”

“It somehow turned out that way.”

‘Is it to increase the completion rate of your saga or your heart is black? I want to know that.’

Because he had met all the Valkyries he knew.

Adenmaha was watching with sharp eyes as if she was thinking of the same thing as Cuchulainn and then let out a long sigh and spoke to Tae Ho.

“I will be going to Nidhogg then. It’s about time she woke up.”

‘She’s a real mom.’

Looking at how she cared for Nidhogg, she looked more like a mom rather than an unnie.

Tae Ho agreed to Cuchulainn’s words like usual and turned to look at Ragnar.

Ragnar pointed to a secluded direction with his chin.

“Shall we start our conversation over there?”

< Episode 46 – Idun’s (3) > End

Episode 46/Chapter 4: Idun's (4)

The sanctum of Idun was composed of one big central hall and nine rooms that connected to it. Each one of these rooms was quite big and some of them had smaller rooms connected to it once again.

Ragnar took Tae Ho to the smallest room and then sat on a long chair that was in the wall. Tae Ho sat next to him so they looked like they were seated on a bench.

Ragnar was usually like this, he didn't hit around the bush. He asked directly.

"There are two things I should tell you. One is related to the top rank and the other one is about 'that'. Which one do you want to hear?"

'That' thing Odin mentioned.

Tae Ho was really curious about 'that' but he put his curiousness aside for now.

"Let's hear about the top rank first. I think that the order will fit in then."

Tae Ho had always been curious about the boundary of a top rank since he first met Ragnar and looking at the situation, it was highly probable that 'that' was also more related than the top rank. Then it was better to listen about the top rank first.

"Right, let's go with that first."

Ragnar came to a decision and then smacked his lips while rubbing his hands. It seemed like he had to organize things in his head before he made his long explanation.

"Tae Ho, just like you know there are few superior ranked warriors and above than you would think in Valhalla. It's because it hasn't been restored completely since the Great War. Especially

for the top ranked warriors.....They were few in numbers in the first place but it decreased even more.”

Tae Ho nodded. The number of warriors only amounted to six hundred thousand although it was including the Steel warriors. But only a dozen of them were superior ranked warriors.

It wasn't originally like this. There were many more superior ranked warriors before the Great War took place.

“The number of top ranked warriors currently active is merely four and the ones that can be truly called as the real top ranked warriors are two.”

“The real top ranked warriors?”

Tae Ho tilted his head and asked. It was because it was a concept he was hearing for the first time.

“Right, There is quite a big gap between top ranked warriors just like there is for any other rank. But the gap isn't made by the amount of runes or the number of sagas..... It's different from the other ranks.”

The amount of runes and proficiency in attributes was the most basic gap.

But of course, you weren't always strong just because you had a lot of runes as the warriors of Valhalla had their sagas. There were plenty of cases that the differences in ability got shortened based on the characteristic of a saga or their abilities.

“The lowest ranked class is the stage where you learn about accumulating runes. The inferior class is the stage that prepares you to receive the strength of a God and the intermediate class is the stage that you start using the power of a God.”

Ragnar spoke of something basic and looked at Tae Ho's eyes fixedly and continued speaking.

“If you become a superior ranked warrior, you are able to use the

power of a God full fledgedly and due to that, ordinary sagas are able to surpass their limits and become a myth ranked saga. Then, what is a top ranked warrior? Is there a rank above the myth rank?”

‘Why is the one doing the explanation asking the questions? That old man only tells necessary things usually but when he starts explaining he starts to speak for a long time. Is it because he is a king?’

Cuchulainn’s intrusion was not only sudden this time but also sharp.

Ragnar said in a low voice while Tae Ho agreed inwardly.

“If you become a top ranked warrior, you obtain a divinity of your own.”

“A divinity?”

“Yes. It’s beyond simply receiving the strength of the God you serve.... and you start obtaining your own divine power.”

The power of a God which you started to handle from the intermediate rank had its base on the God of the respective legion.

And the power of a God that was generated by a warrior was also like that.

Tae Ho’s divine power, as a warrior of Idun, was similar to Idun’s and Ragnar’s divine power as warriors of Odin which was similar to Odin’s.

But it changed from the top rank.

It did use the divine power of the God from a legion as its base but you could also use your own divinity.

“But obtaining a divinity isn’t an easy thing. No, precisely speaking, should I say a strong divinity?”

Asgard was a land of Gods. The Aesir and the Vanir were all composed by Gods.

Because of that, looking at it with another perspective there were thousands of divinities in Asgard alone.

“You can say that you become a half God the moment you become a top ranked warrior. There’s a clear difference with the superior rank but looking at it from a distance it’s not that different. The divinity you obtain at first is really meager.”

A divinity similar to a baby of the Aesir.

“Tae Ho, it’s a bit disrespectful but....if you were to differentiate the Gods of Asgard, how many ranks do you think they have?”

“Three...no, four.”

Tae Ho answered quickly and Ragnar put on a satisfied smile at the answer of his disciple.

“Right, just like you said they can be differentiated in four. We will differentiate them as inferior, intermediate, superior and top rank due to the convenience.”

Ragnar spread all his fingers excluding his thumb and started to speak.

“The Gods that belong to the inferior rank are the citizens of Asgard.....the normal Gods of the Aesir and the Vanir. They do have a divinity but it’s not that amazing. You can say that most of the Valkyries also belong to this rank.”

Adenmaha was a Goddess just like she claimed to be one and the maknaes of Idun’s legion Sigrun and Gudrun were also Goddesses.

“The Gods that are at the intermediate rank are the ones we know of but aren’t that powerful. They get a quality in their divinity and also have their roles set but they aren’t Gods great enough to have a legion.”

Eir, the Goddess of healing and Var, the Goddess of marriage oaths, belonged to this category.

“The Gods that belong to the superior rank are the ones that have

their own legions or possess strength comparable to them. Idun also belongs to this rank.”

The battle Gods like Hermod and Ullr that had their own legions and the Gods that have the same divinity as the battle Gods even though they don't have their legions, just like the Goddess of fertility Gefion.

‘It's kind of new but I wonder why he didn't use polite words only with Idun. It seems like that old man already knows that Idun-nim and Heda share the same body.’

It was like Cuchulainn had said. Taking a look back to the past, Ragnar had never used polite words with Idun.

“The difference in your divinity is quite significant even though they are at the same superior rank. Idun is quite at the top even among superior ranked Gods.”

It was like a difference in their battle power existed between superior ranked warriors.

“And Odin-nim, Freya-nim and Thor-nim belong to the top rank?”

“Right, also.....Heimstream-nim that lead the Vanir in Vanaheim?”

Odin was the king of Gods and Thor was the most powerful battle God in the entire Asgard.

The only ones that could stand shoulder to shoulder with them were the housekeeper of Asgard Freya or the captain of the Vanir, Heimstream.

“Returning back to the topic, you will obtain a divinity when you become a top ranked warrior. It's a divinity that there's no need to put a qualifier and there's no need to.”

Just a God.

The normal Gods that compose most of the Aesir and the Vanir.

“The divinity doesn’t simply get strong just by accumulating runes. You get strong only when you raise great merits, just like when a saga is made. The top ranked warrior has to make a myth of himself.”

Ragnar paused for a moment and took a breath. He looked to a distant place instead of Tae Ho and continued speaking.

“Idun is the Goddess of life and youth. Thor-nim is the Goddess of thunder and Freya-nim is the Goddess of magic and beauty. A deity suitable to the strong divinity tends to be added.”

A qualifier that gets added to your divinity.

The name that represents the divinity of a God.

“A real top ranked warrior is a warrior that has a deity and their divinity is at least at the intermediate rank.”

It was the most decisive factor why differences existed between top ranked warriors.

“If you compare the lowest ranked warriors to the grains of sand in a sandbox, the top ranked warriors are only a few grains that can climb to the top. Yet once again, only a minority can become a real top ranked warrior and obtain a deity.”

Back in the days before the Great War, that there was comparatively more top ranked warriors, the number of top ranked warriors that possessed a deity could only be counted on one hand.

“I’m saying this to you but not even I could obtain a deity. I reached to the point right before I received one but.....I ended up receiving an injury that forced me to retire. Compared to the intermediate Gods, the top ranked warriors are still ‘warriors’. So it’s close to impossible for someone that has left the top rank to obtain a deity. I explained them grouping up the intermediate Gods due to convenience but actually, the process by which you obtain a divinity and the principle behind it is different.”

The injury Ragnar suffered wasn't simply physical. Ragnar's soul and his divinity received damage.

“Before the Great War, there were more than five warriors that had climbed to the real top rank but now there are only two. One is someone you already know of.”

“The dragon killer Sigurd.”

His name came out from his mouth by its own. Ragnar smiled bitterly and nodded.

“Right, his deity is dragon killer. Dragon killer God Sigurd. The strongest warrior of Valhalla and the one that possess the divinity of a superior God that surpasses any battle God.”

‘He became stronger from the Great War. Even if we count all the Gods of Asgard.....no, in the first place he's also a God so it wouldn't matter. Anyways, he's certainly one of the strongest guys.’

Cuchulainn added some words. His words, which came from the mouth of a master of Scathach's style techniques, could be trusted.

“The other one is the One that seeks revenge, Bali. He's not as strong as Sigurd but he's still a strong warrior that obtained a deity. He's not a pure human but a demigod. He's one of the progeny that Odin conceived before the Great war.”

Sigurd also had the blood of Odin flowing in him but it couldn't be compared to a God of Odin.

But regardless of that, Sigurd was the strongest warrior and had a stronger deity than Bali.

“You will also be able to obtain your own divinity after going through the top ranked ceremony. After that, the deity you obtain will depend on your accomplishments.”

It was the same as the saga.

You couldn't obtain a deity that you wished. You needed to do

actions suitable to the deity and the world and the people had to recognize it.

‘You won’t become the God of Valkyries, right?’

Tae Ho flinched at Cuchulainn’s mumbling and Ragnar, that misunderstood his flinch as being nervous, said.

“Well, there’s no need to be that nervous. A deity isn’t something you can obtain that easily anyways. Don’t be in a hurry and.....you should just act as you have been doing until now.”

“I understand.”

“Right, cheer up. You should also increase your rank if you want to marry the Goddess of youth.”

“Uh, um. Yes.”

Ragnar smiled as if he wanted to ease his nervousness. You could also see the look of an old master from him.

“Let’s talk about the top rank at a later time..... Then, I will explain about ‘that’.”

Ragnar stopped speaking for a moment, maybe because he finished a long explanation, and then smacked his lips. Tae Ho hurriedly took out a barrel of wine from the air and gave it to Ragnar.

“You are quick witted.”

“Well, I am your disciple.”

Ragnar smirked and drank some of the alcohol Tae Ho gave him. The honey wine was refreshing and sweet.

“Asgard is currently fighting against the giants of Jotunheim. The reason for the battle is simple. We are people that want to maintain the world and they wish for its destruction.”

It wasn’t a battle between evil and good.

It was a clash between beings that had different ideologies which

the other couldn't understand at all.

“Those two groups are currently at war in Asgard and the nine realms. There are also worlds that got destroyed like Erin.”

A world where the ones hoping to maintain the world won.

A world where the ones wishing to destroy the world won.

“Right, Erin. With Erin's destruction we were able to somewhat realize their true nature.”

Ragnar's eyes became sharp. A clear objective was decided at the word 'their'.

“The ones hoping to maintain the world are assisting each other just like the Temple helped us this time. When Erin was destroyed we, Asgard, went to help them. Because of that we also thought that we would obviously be linked to the ones wishing to destroy the world. But it was beyond our expectation. The ones wishing to destroy the world gathered to become one but there is a strong organization that commands them all.”

The Temple didn't know of Asgard's danger before they requested for help. It was unavoidable. They were allies but weren't completely one.

But it was different for the ones wishing to destroy the world.

“The kingdom of fire.”

It was a name Loki had once spoke of. Ragnar started speaking quickly.

“The giant of fire Surtr, that burnt down Erin, isn't a giant of Jotunheim nor a fomioire of Erin. He's also not a titan of Olympus or a monster of the Temple. He belongs to the kingdom of fire, Muspelheim.”

The Great war that wa carried out in Asgard and Erin.

Several superior ranked warriors and above lost their lives in the process. But the ones that took their lives weren't only the

fompires nor the giants of Jotunheim.

The ones that actually cut off their lives were the strong beings belonging to the kingdom of fire.

“The World Wolf Fenrir and the Space Snake Jormungand>”

Loki’s two children.

“They aren’t the underlings of the magician king. They are existences of the same rank that belong to the kingdom of fire just like the magician king.”

The reason the Space Snake Jormungand didn’t appear was because of that. He was in Muspelheim and not Jotunheim.

“I also got to know of this recently but the reason the God of fire and lies Loki gave up the lies and became an underling of the magician king was to obtain information about the kingdom of fire.”

“Asgard didn’t know anything proper about the kingdom of fire before Surtr appeared in Erin. They needed information about the unknown.”

Tae Ho understood. He nodded unconsciously.

I don’t know about the warriors of Valhalla but the warriors of the small realms and the dead spirits of Helheim may lose their will to fight if they learn of the existence of the kingdom of fire when the war with Jotunheim was already this hard.

“We won in this war and accomplished the task of having killed the magician king and the world wolf but the kingdom of fire still remains. The giants of Jotunheim weren’t exterminated completely.”

Ragnar closed his eyes and then spoke refreshingly as if trying to push away all the seriousness until now.

“Well, I’m just saying. Enemies still remain so get strong quickly and protect Asgard. And obtain a deity.”

“Isn’t the conclusion too shabby?”

“But it’s still the truth.”

It really was the case. They spoke really seriously but looking at it from a distance, only a simple fact remained.

“Tae Ho master!”

Nidhogg’s voice was heard at the right time.

“You really are popular.”

The door opened up the moment Ragnar spoke. Nidhogg seemed to be brighter than usual maybe because she enjoyed her nap plentifully.

She embraced Tae Ho and Adenmaha shook her head from behind like she couldn’t do anything about her and laughed.

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and spoke.

‘Won’t your deity become something like God of dragons or something alike? Adenmaha is a dragon and Rolo is also a dragon for now. And McLaren is also of the dragonkin.’

God of dragons.

‘That interests me a bit.’

But he still couldn’t know what kind of deity he would obtain.

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Time passed once again.

The sixth day since the army led by Odin left Valhalla.

Rasgrid, who was searching for the remnants of the forces of Jotunheim that dispersed in the outskirts of Asgard, discovered something weird.

‘There’s no traces of the path having been cut off.’

She interrogated the remnants just in case but only the same conclusion came up.

The magician king cut off the path leading to the Temple. He made the Beast king Tiachi catch the Valkyries and stop them from warning the Temple of the emergency.

But the path to Olympus didn't get cut off and they didn't even try to catch them.

It was strange. She felt a sense of incongruity.

Why didn't they cut off the path?

And one more thing. Something she couldn't help but wonder.

Why didn't they return when the path wasn't cut off? What happened with the 30 Valkyries that headed to Olympus?

Rasgrid returned back to Valhalla hurriedly.

< Episode 46 – Idun's (4) > End

Episode 46/Chapter 5: Idun's (5)

Valhalla was busy.

Originally it should have been as leisure and solitary as they only left behind the necessary defense forces and most of the others left with Odin on the expedition to the north but it was different this time.

It was because the restoration of Valhalla was taking place.

The restoration project could be divided in two big parts.

One was the project to restore the fortress and moats and the other one was the reconstruction of the residences of the legions.

Close to 10 days had passed after the battle ended but the restoration project was still at its early stages.

It was because they had to focus on retrieving the corpses of the dead and the destroyed fragments of the Steel warriors and getting rid of the corpses of the giants and evil spirits.

In addition there was one important thing.

It was the funeral for the giant of fire Loki and the Steel warriors that got destroyed completely.

The funeral that took place the day before Odin went out to the battlefield was more solemn than ever.

Part of the reason was that the number of Steel warriors destroyed in this battle was much bigger than the ones that got destroyed the past hundred years but the most important reason was because of the giant of fire Loki.

The betrayer Loki.

The cause of evil that brought catastrophe to Asgard.

They were comparatively calm expressions. There were countless expressions that insulted and disdained Loki.

Bu all of these things were a misunderstanding. Loki wasn't a traitor. He was the real protector of Asgard that had sacrificed everything he had.

“Bastard.”

Freya spoke after she placed Loki's corpse on a wooden boat and pushed it away. She had a teary face right now.

She had cursed him that much the past hundred years, resented him.

She didn't even have the time to apologize nor get angry to ask why he did that.

Odin fired a flaming arrow to the boat that was getting farther away. He took in the death of Loki who was an old friend, a brother and his son at the same time.

The day after Loki's funeral ended Odin led his force and headed to the north. After that, the restoration project took place for five days and when it completed to some extent they got the leisure to restore the residences.

Idun's legion was noisy.

Close to half of the warriors in this legion became Steel warriors due to the war but new members doubled or more the size of those that had left.

The warriors of Midgard had come to support Valhalla.

They didn't have the need to cross the rainbow stair Bifrost. They just had to follow the lead of the Valkyries in the place they died and enter Valhalla.

The majority of the newly entered warriors wished to enter Idun's legion and the Valkyries that asked them the reason for that said in one voice.

“The golden apple tree.”

The beautiful golden illusion that had surged up high in the sky.

The Valkyrie that threw the question understood. It was because she also remembered the scene of that day when she closed her eyes.

“This is Idun’s legion.....”

The princess of Kataron Helga, who was among the newly entered warriors, spoke in a voice filled with emotions. The warriors that were next to her were putting the same eyes.

“It’s just like Idun’s warrior said.”

“Ohh, ohhh!”

They were different to their seniors that entered before them. Until then there were a lot of things that were exaggerated but now all of those things turned real.

First, there were a lot of majestic ships.

Half of them were ships of Erin that Odin gave him and the remaining half were gifts from Freya.

Because the newly entered warriors easily surpassed a hundred.

Freya didn’t have the justification to decline Idun’s strong claim to give her some ships.

But of course, it wasn’t that Freya didn’t want to provide her with ships as she was sincerely grateful towards Tae Ho. She did show some pertinacious sides as she was the one doing the housekeeping but still she knew how to use things when she had to.

“Look over there! They are the Shinsoos!”

“Ohh! Ohhh!”

Rolo and his wives and their chicks were flying in the sky. It was the result of Tae Ho having recognized Rolo’s merits and having brought his previous wives when he had the time. Rolo, that was the captain of a gryphon pack, had more than ten wives so naturally he also had a lot of chicks.

McLaren was showing his strong presence in the middle of those chicks and the warriors admired the look of the huge rock serpent.

“Warriors, I welcome you to Idun’s residence.”

The one that welcomed the warriors was Adenmaha. Her rank was the highest after Heda, who was the representative of the legion.

The ones that were standing behind Adenmaha weren’t only Sigrun and Gudrun. There were five Valkyries that entered the legion like the warriors.

“Helga.”

“Mister.”

Merlin, who had come out to the dock along with Adenmaha, welcomed Helga separately. There were several emotions on his face looking at Helga.

He hoped that she could marry the one she loved, give birth to children and raise them, do everything she wanted and have a happy life.

But she came too early.

She was merely a teen.

“I’m fine. I’m also happy right now.”

Helga seemed to have read the regret in Merlin’s face and spoke bravely. She wasn’t forcing those words but was being sincere. She had chosen the life of a warrior like now instead of the life of a princess.

But of course, she was worried about her siblings she had left in Midgard and her father, King Ivar. She had a big difference in age with her siblings so she raised them as if they were her own children and also wanted to see the youngest sibling that treated herself as being the mother.

But even so, she didn’t regret entering Idun’s legion. She had

entered Valhalla like everyone desired so her family would probably be proud of her.

“Right, it’s good if you are satisfied with it.”

Because it was none other than her life.

“Before that, it’s kind of amazing. My body is the same as when I was alive. No, it feels like it became better.”

“It should be as that is the new body Odin gave you. You will also start accumulating runes.”

This was the reason why you had to die first to enter Valhalla.

All the warriors that enter Valhalla would receive a new body over their souls.

The rune accumulating system that Odin and Freya developed.

The warriors of Valhalla needed a body engraved with a special magic if they wanted to accumulate runes, that was the core of the growth of the warriors.

The body Helga received this time was a new body Freya developed after her research. It’s formal name was ‘standard body of a warrior generation 7’. It was Freya’s ambitious work that managed to bring up it’s performance by 1.2 from the generation 6.

It wouldn’t be good to tell this to Helga, whose eyes were currently shining.

Merlin held back himself and extended his hand to her. It was to introduce her to the residence.

“Although we will be focused on rebuilding for a while.”

Idun’s legion was also as destroyed as it could.

But Helga smiled brightly as if she still liked that and grabbed Merlin’s hand.

&

Schathach was spending a busy time.

Part of it was because the number of warriors she had to nurture increased from ten to more than a hundred but the bigger reason was because she now had more members that she had to train individually.

The king of birds Hraesvelg and the black dragon Nidhogg.

She taught Hraesvelg the proper Scathach's style technique as he had learned an imitation of it by himself and for Nidhogg, she taught her the origin of mystical magic utilizing her vast magical power.

The origin of mystical magic just used magic power as it was without reciting any chants so it wasn't that efficient but it had a strong point that it was really easy to use.

Nidhogg had overflowing magic power anyways. Nidhogg and her would have fallen in a pit of pain if she taught her complicated techniques so it was better to teach her simple origin magic.

But of course, Adenmaha's classes still proceeded in the middle of this. Adenmaha had learned quite a lot of mystical magic under Scathach but Scathach didn't like that she couldn't use mystical magic properly when she got out to battle. Because of that, Adenmaha's classes were too realistic and more intense than others.

Eight days past since Odin departed and ten days since the battle against the magician king.

While Adenmaha's groaning and pained voice was heard in a deep place of Idun's residence, Tae Ho was facing Freya.

&

"The ceremony for the top ranked warrior will be after three days."

"The expedition team will return so soon?"

At the deepest place of Sessrumnir, Freya's palace.

Freya, who was half lying while stroking ten cats, shook her head.

“No, I will proceed with it informally alone. It’s better the more top ranked warriors we have.”

She had a relaxed posture but you could see that she was really exhausted from her expression and voice. She had been working without resting for the past ten days.

“We will proceed with the ceremony formally when Odin returns. That will probably take about two months.”

They had to completely drive away the army of the frost giant king and return to Valhalla.

“Can I ask about the situation on the front lines?”

Freya closed her eyes at Tae Ho’s question. Each of her small actions were beautiful and lovely but he felt regretful seeing that she was clearly exhausted.

Freya let out a long sigh and then fixed her posture a bit and continued speaking.

“Well, it’s quite good if I were to simplify it. But the resistance isn’t weak either. Actually.....honestly speaking, the reason we are rushing your promotion is because one of the top ranked warriors died.”

“Did Sigurd.....”

“No, not him and not Bali either. It’s someone called Van, you should have never met him.”

He was the one that fought the most eagerly among the top ranked warriors. He was always stuck in the front lines so there was no opportunity for him to meet Tae Ho.

“They are winning but it’s impossible for them not to have anyone die at all. But don’t worry too much. The interest of the giant king Harmarti is to stall the forces he can to retreat safely

rather than strike back and win.”

The both sides fighting had already determined the loss of a side. This advantageous situation would continue until the end if there are no variables.

“Ask Hildegarde about the details. She’s writing up a report to hand to the commanders.”

“I will do so.”

“Right, let’s speak about Nidhogg and Hraesvelg next.”

Freya lied down once again and slowly stroked the fur of a cat she had close to her.

“You know that their bodies are a kind of magical armor, right?”

“Yes.”

“I retrieved them for now and placed them in a place that is abundant in magical power. They will be able to recover faster if the blacksmiths of Valhalla assist in this.....but you also know that we are quite busy lately, right? We will have to leave them to heal naturally for the moment.”

The blacksmiths of Valhalla were all dispatched on restoration projects. It was fortunate that the reinforcements of Nidavellir helped with the physical labor, if they hadn’t the blacksmiths would have already passed out of exhaustion. They didn’t have time to rest at all.

Tae Ho, that now knew of the situation of the blacksmiths, asked carefully.

“Will it take long?”

“I think it’s faster for Hraesvelg’s case but Nidhogg suffered great damages. There’s a probability it may take a few months even if the blacksmiths get to help later on.”

Freya frowned and spoke. Actually, not even she could be certain of it as it was her first time looking at this magical armor.

“I’m still glad that they are able to recover.”

“Of course. In the case of Hraesvelg, he came to help us without asking for anything. We have to take responsibility and restore his body and also reward him greatly.”

Freya spoke as if it was nothing but Tae Ho admired Freya’s kind heart.

“What?”

“I feel that you are really beautiful.”

She didn’t only receive the help of another and try to use it.

She thanked it and tried to pay it back.

Perhaps it was an obvious thing but reality was that the obvious thing often didn’t happen as it should.

Freya was of course a beautiful Goddess. In the eyes of others she was the most beautiful one and for Tae Ho, she was the third most beautiful.

‘But being beautiful doesn’t only mean the looks.’

Cuchulainn smirked and said. And Tae Ho also agreed to that.

“Bragi’s rune is working well. Too well.”

Freya snorted at Tae Ho’s direct compliment. Idun and Heda would have flushed at that but Freya was much more experienced than them.

“Anyways, let’s leave it here.....should I also keep my promise?”

“Promise?”

“I told you that I would give you a blessing if you finished the task in Vanaheim well. In addition, you made a really incredible saga.”

Freya, who was giggling until now, opened her eyes sharply. She was beautiful like a thorny rose but was also threatening.

“Shall we see how much the completion rate increases with one blessing?”

Freya whispered seductively and then rose up. Tae Ho flinched unconsciously at the really enchanting movement.

‘How interesting.’

Cuchulainn wasn’t thinking of helping him at all.

Freya crawled slowly towards Tae Ho, who was sitting in the floor, instead of walking. Cuchulainn got excited and brought up his will to try to receive a lower ranked blessing instead of the top ranked blessing.

A few more seconds like that.

Freya arrived in front of Tae Ho. Tae Ho opened his mouth and tried to form some words.

And it was right at that moment.

“Freya-nim!”

The one that entered the room by opening the doors abruptly was Hildegarde. Freya reacted immediately at her urgent voice. She dissipated the atmosphere from before in an instant and stood up.

“What’s wrong?”

Hildegarde, who respected Freya to the extreme, was acting this rude. It meant that it certainly was something that urgent.

Tae Ho also turned to look back. Hildegarde contained her breathing and spoke quickly.

“The signal of Valkyrie Rasgrid disappeared.”

Her signal, that had gone to the outskirts of Asgard, disappeared.

She wouldn’t be that agitated if it was only that.

There was one more thing.

The report Rasgrid sent before.

The Valkyries that didn't return from Olympus.

Rasgrid, that made her comrade Valkyries return, went up to investigate alone.

“Where was the signal cut off?”

If she had crossed over to Olympus it was possible for the signal to get cut. Because it was another world. It was rather weirder if the signal got maintained.

But Hildegarde's answer was different to Freya's expectation. She bit her lips once and then answered in a dark voice.

“It's right before the path heading to Olympus.”

&

Rasgrid took a breath. It was impossible to escape and also impossible to hide.

The warriors that had gone out to investigate with her had all died. They were intermediate ranked warriors but they couldn't resist at all.

The barrier that covered the surroundings was really strong. It blocked everything from inside and outside.

Rasgrid, who was looking for a hole to get out, closed her eyes tightly. It was because she realized that the owner of the barrier had reached behind her.

Rasgrid took a breath for the last time. She then turned around and put strength in her hand holding the sword.

The owner of the barrier.

The one that defeated several intermediate ranked warriors easily as if flicking his hand.

Rasgrid opened her eyes widely. Her opponent wasn't a giant nor an evil spirit.

“You are.....”

“It ends here.”

The existence didn't let her speak anymore.

The master of the barrier approached Rasgrid.

< Episode 46 – Idun's (5) > End

Episode 47/Chapter 1: The fastest one (1)

Rasgrid's signal had disappeared. .

Tae Ho activated his saga as soon as Hildegrid finished speaking.

[Saga: The warrior that had a Goddess meet him]

But nothing was summoned which was to be expected.

'She's too far.'

Hildegrid had said that Rasgrid's signal was cut off on the path leading to Olympus. The distance he could summon the target with his saga was limited, compared to the summoning rock.

When it was The warrior that had a Valkyrie meet him the limit was a radius of one kilometer but after it got promoted to The warrior that had a Goddess meet him the limit increased to three kilometers.

The path heading to Olympus took three days in a carriage from Valhalla. Actually, the region where he caught Rolo was around there. If they wanted to get closer they would have to travel one to two more days.

He already knew that she wouldn't be summoned. Tae Ho used his saga just in case and felt worried.

"Calm down."

Freya sensed Tae Ho use his saga and said. She bit her lips once and then spoke to Hildegrid.

"Tell Idun to come here immediately. We will proceed with the top rank promotion of Idun's warrior."

"I understand."

Hildegrid answered immediately and left the room. Freya spoke to Tae Ho.

"I know about your relationship with Rasgrid. You have known

her since you were a lowest ranked warrior but calm down. It will be meaningless to charge over there right now.”

Tae Ho was agitated and Freya looked him straight in the eyes. She explained with a calm voice.

“We can guess two things with the signal getting cut. First, Rasgrid died completely. Second, Rasgrid moved to a place where the signal is blocked.”

She didn’t use provocative words on purpose. They were only rational guesses.

“If it’s the former, it will be really meaningless to go running over there right now and even if it’s the latter, it won’t have any meaning either. No matter how much you hurry, you will still take a few hours to reach the path leading to Olympus.”

Rasgrid’s signal didn’t weaken. It had disappeared completely.

That’s why the probabilities of her having suffered a fatal injury was low. But of course, there was also the possibility she moved to a place that blocked her signal while being greatly injured or was trapped somewhere. Even if that was the case he had no methods to go to her right now.

‘Freya-nim’s words are right. Calm down and think calmly.’

Cuchulainn added. He also liked Rasgrid but they wouldn’t be able to solve this when their emotions got ahead of their actions.

“Already 30 Valkyries didn’t return and in addition Rasgrid disappeared.”

Freya continued speaking. She was half speaking to herself.

“There’s also the possibility she’s got done by the remnant forces of the giants but something may be wrong with Olympus.”

The Temple, Olympus, and Asgard were allies, but they weren’t neighbouring countries. They were different worlds from each other.

The Temple didn't know of Asgard's situation before Kaldea notified them of the emergency.

If Tae Ho hadn't defeated the Beast king Tiachi and opened up a path the Temple would have noticed Asgard's situation only after it collapsed completely.

It was the same for Olympus. If Olympus got done in without having the chance to warn of the danger or were in the same situation they couldn't warn of the danger, Asgard didn't have any methods to notice that danger.

Of course, the three worlds maintained a constant contact to prepare for the worse. But even so that wasn't a few times in weeks but one or two times in a year. So a situation where it was already too late when they realized was highly probable.

"We have to go to investigate and this time it can't be a Valkyrie but someone really strong. They should be at the class of a commander. Right, like you Tae Ho."

If they sent someone weak they would just be defeated.

Freya grabbed Tae Ho's hands. She acted as the housekeeper of Valhalla and commander of the Valkyries.

"I will send you even if you don't request it. No, I would like you to go. Currently there are only two commanders left in Valhalla including you. But I can't just send you like that. I will send you after I strengthen you a little bit."

That was the reason she called Idun.

She would turn Tae Ho into a top ranked warrior and grant him with a divinity.

"How long will the ceremony take?"

It was a ceremony that had been planned to take place after three days. Freya frowned at Tae Ho's question and answered.

"Idun and I will have to work hard but we will be able to end it in

some minutes.”

“If it’s too much.....”

“There are times that we have to overdo it.”

Freya smirked as she spoke. That look was far from being elegant but Tae Ho felt that Freya was really beautiful.

‘She’s strong. It seems like light is shining from her.’

Tae Ho agreed to Cuchulainn’s words. Odin didn’t give her the position of Valhalla and Asgard’s housekeeper for nothing.

“Do you feel like falling for me now?”

Freya’s playful voice turned Tae Ho back to reality. He shook his head and Freya snickered.

“It will take some time to prepare the ceremony. Actually, I was planning to prepare it slowly starting today. That’s why you will become a top ranked warrior after a few hours.”

It was a ceremony granting a divinity.

Looking at it in another perspective, it was the same as promoting a female warrior of Valhalla into a Valkyrie but there was quite a difference in it. Because of that, they couldn’t use the magic circle that was usually used when promoting Valkyries. She had to use a new magic circle solely for Tae Ho.

“Hrist!”

“Yes, Freya-nim.”

The Valkyrie of Freya’s legion that had the same name as the Valkyrie of Hermod’s legion answered to her call. At Freya’s summons, she entered the room respectfully..

“Tell the returning group to hurry up. You can take all the preparations you need.”

“I understand.”

Hrist didn’t seem to need an explanation after hearing ‘returning

group' and she left the room instead of asking anymore.

Freya explained quickly.

"I can't send you alone. I will round up an investigation team. Originally, it should be solely composed by members of Idun's legion but that would be impossible since all the warriors are lowest ranked except for you. That's why I will give you warriors from other legions."

It was a reasonable story but the words 'returning group' bothered Tae Ho.

Why was it a returning group? Where were they returning from?

"Are you talking about?"

"Yes, about them. Bracky and Siri were already returning from the battlefield to participate in your ceremony. It's a really rare thing even in Valhalla that a top ranked warrior is born. Even if it's informal we were planning to show the utmost devotion to it."

But of course, it was possible only because the situation was favorable. They were only taking two superior ranked warriors from the battlefield and call them to the rear.

"I will give you some Valkyries on top of Siri and Bracky. A top ranked warrior, two superior ranked warriors and about two Valkyries is a force that is more than enough for an investigation team. If an investigation group like this one gets defeated.....We have to retreat the forces that went to the north to chase Harmarti."

If a commander-and a top ranked warrior on top of that was defeated, Asgard would also be in great danger.

"Could something have happened in Olympus?"

"Let's hope it's nothing serious."

It was a low probability for it to be nothing. But it was right at that moment.

[Freya unni! What happened?]

Idun's voice was heard from a bust of a Goddess that was in a side of the room. Freya used the bust like a phone to contact Idun.

Freya smirked at Idun's urgent and dubious voice.

"Come quickly. If you don't come in 5 minutes I will eat your warrior."

[What are you.....]

"Start!"

Idun's voice got cut off the moment she yelled. It was because Idun cut the connection instead of Freya.

"It seems like she's really hurrying. Love is really incredible."

Freya looked at Tae Ho with eyes that meant that it was good he was receiving love and Tae Ho cleared his throat with a slightly embarrassed face.

"Well, she should be coming soon so let's finish what we were doing."

"What we were doing?"

"What we were doing."

Freya opened her eyes sharply and approached Tae Ho with one step and Tae Ho flinched when he thought of what happened before Hildegard intruded.

'Envious bastard.'

Cuchulainn said and Freya put a playful smile once again.

"Pant, pant."

Idun actually arrived at Freya's room after some minutes while panting heavily and Freya giggled while stroking the cats.

"Hey, did you really think I was going to eat your warrior? You should have come slowly."

‘She did have a little taste although it was only in the forehead.’

Cuchulainn spoke in a small voice.

And at that moment Idun glared at Freya and yelled.

“Unni! No, aunt!”

There was no way Idun heard Cuchulainn’s voice but she was still angry that Freya had used Tae Ho.

Freya opened her eyes sharply at Idun’s changed way of addressing Freya.

“Hey! I told you not to call me aunt but unnie!”

“What unnie! You are an aunt!”

Freya and the previous Idun were like sisters so actually, aunt was the correct expression for the daughter of the previous Idun.

“You really.”

“Really what?”

It was completely a fight between sisters. Tae Ho butted in hurriedly.

“Idun-nim, calm down. We have to hurry.”

It was certainly effective. Idun, that was breathing hard while looking at Freya, calmed down her breathing and asked Tae Ho quickly.

“My warrior Tae Ho, just what happened?”

“The signal of Rasgrid that was investigating the path leading to Olympus disappeared.”

The answer came from Freya. Idun blinked a few times as she didn’t know what she was talking about but soon, understood the seriousness of the situation and also understood why Freya had called her.

“Let’s start with the ceremony of the top ranked warrior.”

Freya stood up from her seat.

&

The preparation of the ceremony took place in Freya's room.

Freya ordered the Valkyries to prepare for the ceremony and drew a complicated magic circle in the middle of the room with Idun. It seemed like not anyone was able to do it as the process took an abundant amount of divine power.

In addition, it wasn't something that ended in a short moment just like Freya said. About three hours passed until Idun and Freya completed the magic circle.

Freya got wet with her sweat. She stood in her place with Idun while placing Tae Ho at the center of the magic circle. She recited a chant to make a part of the magic circle shine and continued to recite new chants.

About ten minutes later. Freya stopped her chants when the entire magic circle started to shine. She took a deep breath and spoke to Tae Ho.

"There's only the last step left. It is to engrave the name of a new God in the real world tree of Yggdrasil."

They would make the world aware of the birth of a new God.

Idun approached Tae Ho and made a light hand gesture. A nameplate of light appeared in the air.

"My warrior Tae Ho. Write your name in this."

Freya gave Tae Ho a feather made of light this time.

Tae Ho pondered for a moment but then wrote his name in Korean and Idun and Freya tilted their heads because they didn't know the characters he wrote but didn't think about it for long. It was because the meaning behind it was more important rather than the letters or symbols.

"Good, we are done with the formalities. I will now lead your

divine power with Idun. Close your eyes and concentrate.”

Tae Ho closed his eyes at Freya’s words. He calmed down himself like meditating and concentrated the power in the inside of his body.

Idun’s divine power.

Tae Ho’s own magic power.

The blessings of the several Valkyries.

He felt a familiar yet unfamiliar strength between those.

“You can feel a strength different from Idun’s divine power right? ALthough it’s small and weak yet.”

Freya spoke and increased her divine power. Idun did the same and the power of the two Goddesses brought up the power of a new God.

It seemed like a flower had blossomed.

It was too small compared to Idun’s or Freya’s divine power but Tae Ho shuddered at that strength. Tae Ho’s soul yelled.

“Congratulations my warrior Tae Ho.”

Idun spoke as if whispering. Tae Ho opened his eyes slowly and looked at his surroundings. Nothing had changed externally but something had certainly changed.

“Divine powers don’t always repel each other. In the end it depends on you but....your divine power will grow in a direction that suits with Idun’s divine power well.”

Freya said with a relaxed face. Idun grabbed Tae Ho’s hand.

“I’m really proud of you.”

The birth of a top ranked warrior was really rare even if you looked at the history of Valhalla.

Because of that, you could say that the birth of a top ranked warrior was the pride of a legion.

“Thank you. Thank you Idun-nim.”

Tae Ho expressed his thanks to Idun and Freya and then put strength in his hands holding Idun’s hands.

Idun spoke once again.

“My warrior Tae Ho, be careful.”

“I understand.”

“Let my blessing accompany you.”

Idun stood on her toes and gave Tae Ho the best blessing. Idun’s hair turned red and then she blessed Tae Ho one more time.

“Let Idun’s blessing accompany you.”

It was Heda. Tae Ho embraced her tightly.

“Let my blessing accompany you.”

And blessed her back. Freya frowned while looking at them and said.

“Do it outside, outside. Not Here.”

Cuchulainn agreed to her words earnestly.

&

Tae Ho left the palace of Freya and then headed to the central hall of Valhalla after bidding his farewell to Idun.

“Tae Ho!”

“Bracky! Siri!”

Siri and Bracky, that returned quickly by using a Black Flash, greeted Tae Ho. It seemed like they didn’t arrive recently looking that they looked fine even though they rode on the Black Flash.

“I congratulate you on having become a top ranked warrior.”

“You are the pride of our knight.”

Siri embraced Tae Ho and Bracky embraced the two of them.

“Thank you for coming like this.”

Tae Ho got out of Bracky’s embrace like escaping and spoke. Siri got to escape thanks to him and smirked but then fixed her expression to a serious one and said.

“I heard about our task.”

“We will be fighting in a really long while.”

An investigation team with Tae Ho as the leader.

The two people had already heard of Rasgrid’s disappearance along the other Valkyries.

Tae Ho nodded once and looked sideways. It was because a familiar aura was approaching.

“Valkyrie Ingrid of Njord’s legion greets the commander of Idun.”

“ingrid?”

She used polite words once again as it was a formal occasion.

It seemed like Ingrid was one of the Valkyries Freya had said they would accompany him. Siri opened her mouth to explain.

“Ingrid will accompany us along with....”

“I will also go.”

“Gandur.”

Gandur, that was hidden in the opposite direction of Ingrid jumped up and appeared.

“It’s a mixed team. As for the Valkyries of Idun’s legion, Heda will have to remain on Valhalla like usual and you can call Adenmaha and Nidhogg whenever you want with your summoning rocks. The remaining two are newbies, we can’t entrust a task this important to newcomers. That’s why the veteran Ingrid and I will be going with you.”

It wasn’t as much as Ingrid but Gandur had stayed back on

Valhalla because of the injury she suffered in the last battle.

“I’m happy i’m able to help commander-nim.”

Ingrid expressed etiquette once again. Her voice and attitudes were stiff but she was filled with warmth like usual and worry about Rasgrid.

“Thank you. Let’s depart immediately.”

They had spent quite a lot of time already. There was no need to waste more time now that all the members were here.

Bracky checked his surroundings and asked.

“What about the transportation? Is there a space door or....so it was that.”

Bracky’s voice became depressed and Siri put an expression as she had gulped something bitter. Tae Ho nodded with a determined face.

And after a while, in the sky of Valhalla.

“My lower body feels weiiiiiiiiird!”

Five Black Flashes crossed the sky of Valhalla.

&

“Are you awake?”

< Episode 47 – The fastest one (1) > End

Episode 47/Chapter 2: The fastest one (2)

Two hours since leaving Valhalla.

At first the Black Flashes were filled with screams but it was silent when it arrived at its destination. The reason was simple.

“Can’t get.....accustomed to it.....”

It was because the Black Flash was hard to ride no matter how many times you rode on it. Even if you accumulated runes and increased your stamina, you still felt dizzy so one thought that it wasn’t a physical problem but a mental one.

Tae Ho staggered out of the Black Flash and looked at his surroundings. Siri was crumpled down with a pale face next to Bracky who had started to throw up as soon as he got down. She was praying in thanks for the solidness of the ground.

Ingrid tried hard not to vomit and Gandur concentrated on inhaling some air.

A few minutes passed.

The group barely managed to recover and then started to search their surroundings. The first one that reacted was certainly Gandur.

“I smell blood.”

She was a Valkyrie of the God of hunting Ullr. Siri, who belonged to the same legion as her, nodded. The two people activated the blessing of tracking, one of the blessings of Ullr, and started to chase after the traces.

“How gruesome.”

Bracky said after passing through some bushes. The scene in front of him left him speechless.

They could see the corpses that were estimated to be the warriors that were investigating the surroundings along with Rasgrid. The

bodies of the intermediate ranked warriors maintained their shapes even after they died but as for the lowest and inferior ranked warriors, their bodies were to the point you couldn't recognize who was who.

‘They couldn't grasp the strength of their opponents.’

Cuchulainn said in a low voice. He frowned while looking at the corpse of an inferior ranked warrior's exploded body.

‘He's quite skilled. It doesn't look like there are several enemies. At most two.....no, this was all done by one person.’

There was no need for Tae Ho to transmit Cuchulainn's opinion. Gandur, who was checking on the corpses of the warriors, bit her lips and said.

“It's more than a hunt rather than a proper battle. One enemy ambushed them while travelling and massacred them.”

An idea formed in Gandur's head. Someone attacked Rasgrid's group, that was moving in a determined direction, and immediately annihilated them.

“It seems like Rasgrid-nim chose to escape or let some warriors escape while she stopped the enemy.....”

Siri paused after speaking and then looked at a distant place. The traces of blood still continued.

“Angerta!”

Ingrid yelled. Tae Ho hurriedly looked at her direction and then gritted his teeth. The corpse of a Valkyrie that had her chest cut was in the embrace of Ingrid, who was sitting down.

Odin's Valkyrie Angerta.

Gandur knew her. That's why a curse came out but she was a Valkyrie of the God of hunting. She couldn't lose her composure when they were tracking their enemy.

“About two hours passed since the signal of Rasgrid disappeared

and we departed. Almost four to five hours passed including the time it took to get here so it's been more than enough time for the souls of the dead warriors to head to Valhalla.

The souls of the warriors of Valhalla would always return to Valhalla no matter where they died as long as they were inside of Asgard.

So this meant that it was possible to hear the situation directly from the concerned parties.

“They'll become Steel warriors as soon as they return?”

Bracky asked hurriedly. If that was the case, the current doubts would all be solved.

But Gandur shook her head at his question.

“They need some time. Time to regain their consciousness and get accustomed to their new steel body. It will take at least a few days.”

The reason Freya dispatched an investigation team was also because of that. If she could turn the souls that returned into Steel warriors she wouldn't have even dispatched an investigation team.

“They didn't return to Valhalla.”

It was then.

Ingrid, who was holding the corpse of Angerta, said in a low voice. She, who wielded the divine power of Njord in her eyes, carefully placed down the corpse of Angerta and then stood up and turned to look at Tae Ho.

“Commander, it seems like the enemy has retrieved the soul of the warriors. If they returned to Valhalla, a trace should be left in their corpses but I can't see anything. In addition, the decisive thing is.....that the soul of Angerta was forcefully removed from her body. It's beyond a simple death.....and I'm certain that her soul was taken by them.”

It wasn't her usual calm and flat voice. There was a grief she couldn't hide in her voice.

Gandur was surprised at Ingrid's words and hurriedly checked Angerta's corpse. She then cursed out.

It was like Ingrid had said. The souls of the warriors didn't return to Valhalla. They were trapped somewhere or retrieved by the attacker.

'They put in a lot of effort to hide their identity. There's a high probability they retrieved the soul of the warriors to prevent them from transmitting information after they became Steel warriors.

Tae Ho also thought the same thing as Cuchulainn. Perhaps, the ambush itself may have been planned beforehand.

While Gandur continued to check on the corpses of the warriors, Siri moved alone to a distant place while following the traces and raised her voice.

"I can't see the corpse of Rasgrid-nim. In addition the signal got cut off here. I'm certain this trail of blood belongs to her."

She, who received the favor of the God of hunting Ullr, could use more varied senses compared to other warriors.

Just by bringing the trace of blood to her tongue she could know who it belonged to and in which state they were at.

'The possibilities I can think of are two.....no, three.'

The attacker killed Rasgrid and took her corpse or kidnapped her just like the Beast king Tiachi did.

And the remaining one.

Rasgrid didn't leave behind any traces and escaped from the attacker.

The probabilities for it were too low. It should be one of the first two options looking at reality and the one that had the highest possibilities among them was the second as Angerta's corpse was

thrown. There was no reason for the attacker to take the corpse of a Valkyrie.

But Tae Ho thought of something different.

He may be thinking to a favorable side for him but something still bothered him.

The opponent didn't want his identity to be revealed to the point he retrieved the souls of the warriors of Valhalla but he had left behind the corpses.

However, more traces got left in a corpse than you thought. What weapon they used, what was the height of the attacker, which was the dominant hand, etc.

In addition he was skilled to the point he massacred several intermediate ranked warriors by himself. So naturally, the range of suspects could only shorten. If a warrior had a saga that specialized in getting all of this information it may have been possible to grasp exactly who was the perpetrator.

But regardless of that the attacker still left behind the corpses.

Why?

How so?

Because he had something more urgent to take care of. Something more important than having his identity exposed through the corpses.

Tae Ho thought of the possibility of Rasgrid having escaped. If she had escaped alive, the attacker would certainly target her since she was alive rather than the already dead warriors.

[Saga: The warrior that had a Goddess meet him]

He activated his saga one more time. He couldn't call Rasgrid like when he activated his saga as soon as he got down from the Black Flash.

But he knew something thanks to using his saga continuously.

Rasgrid was alive. She wasn't dead. And the reason she didn't get summoned wasn't because she was too far away.

There was something blocking Tae Ho and Rasgrid. Tae Ho could sense the direction she was at.

“Olympus.”

The place Rasgrid was at. The thing blocking her summoning was the boundary wall between Asgard and Olympus.

Tae Ho didn't hesitate. He started to walk towards Olympus.

&

“Are you awake?”

Rasgrid opened her eyes. Her head hurt and couldn't see well because her vision was blurry.

“I will give you a healing medicine. It's a bit bitter but endure it.”

Something entered her mouth followed by the voice. It was a potion that was bitter just as the owner of the voice, the man said.

After she gulped some of it forcefully, some energy returned to her body even if it was little. Her head still hurt but she could now see because her eyes were cleared.

She was in the embrace of a handsome man. It seemed like he held her and gave her the medicine in her mouth. Their surroundings was filled with olive tree so they were probably in a forest.

“Are you able to speak?”

The voice of the man, who had a dense blonde hair and blue eyes, was really low and careful. Rasgrid exhaled with difficulty and nodded slowly.

“This is.....”

“Olympus. We could only flee to this place to trick him.”

The man spoke once again. Rasgrid let out a rough sigh while

leaning her head on the chest of the man. Her body felt hot perhaps because of the effects of the medicine and then remembered.

What she saw before she lost consciousness.

The man blocked her mouth with his hands and because of that Rasgrid's attempt to scream was stopped. The man hurriedly covered her mouth and spoke quickly.

"I rescued you. Can't you remember?"

The moment she was about to get done by the spear of the enemy.

Someone tore the barrier and entered. He made the enemy bewildered just with his entrance and then took Rasgrid and left.

She remembered. Rasgrid nodded slowly.

"I will put my hands off from your mouth. Don't scream as he may still be nearby."

Rasgrid nodded once again. The man took his hand off from Rasgrid's mouth with a nervous face.

"What....what happened? Why did he.....no, first of all you.....?"

Rasgrid was a wise person but her questions could only get tangled because the situation and her state were a mess. The man tried to answer each of her questions calmly.

But it was right at that moment.

The man hurriedly turned to look at one direction and Rasgrid flinched and also looked at the same direction.

He was approaching.

She couldn't hear his footsteps and the smell wasn't felt but she could know.

The nasty killing intent.

It was coming this way. He didn't even think of hiding it. It seemed like he was proclaiming that he would never let go of her now that he had chased her this far.

The man gritted his teeth and Rasgrid tried to stand up with her own strength.

The bushes split.

She could now see his appearance clearly.

Rasgrid held a breath. She hadn't seen wrong. It really was him. HE massacred the warriors of Valhalla, killed Angerta and also tried to kill her.

Why? How? Because of what!

It was when she was about to yell and was taking a fighting stance however she could.

[Saga: The warrior that had a Goddess meet him]

A familiar aura covered Rasgrid's body.

&

"Rasgrid!"

Rasgrid blinked at the call. This person also had a handsome face but this time it was someone she knew.

Black hair and black eyes.

Idun's warrior. The commander of Idun!

"Are you fine? Can you recognize me?"

She felt at ease at his voice filled with worry. She felt like tears would drop now that her nervousness had disappeared. She took a breath and checked her surroundings.

It wasn't only Tae Ho. There were more familiar faces.

Siri, Bracky, Ingrid and Gandur.

And Rasgrid could understand at that moment. This place was

inside the connection between Olympus and Asgard.

“Rasgrid, are you okay? Can you tell us what happened?”

Gandur spoke quickly. Her eyes were looking at the big wound Rasgrid had in her stomach. It seemed like she did first aid treatment on it but couldn't heal it completely since the bandages covering it were dyed in red.

Rasgrid nodded. She had to transmit the information even if she was in a worse state.

The one that attacked the warriors of Valhalla.

The one that attacked herself and her benefactor in a not distant place.

Rasgrid opened her mouth. At that moment, Tae Ho and all the others looked at the same direction. They could only do so.

A strong power that shook the entire place.

It swelled up big and made his existence clear.

Gandur and Ingrid were bewildered. SIri opened her eyes sharply and took out the Bow of Tristan. Bracky enhanced his fighting spirit so that his strength surpassed that of normal giant kings.

It seemed like the enemy also noticed them. The strong aura started to move towards them.

In addition there were several of them. They weren't as strong as the strongest aura but were auras that couldn't be ignored at all. Each one of them was really fast.

Rasgrid was certain of it once again and that's why she yelled.

The one approaching them. The one that bared his fangs towards Asgard.

“Achilles!”

The great hero of Olympus.

The one that had the fastest speed among people along with

Atalante.

The one that received the number one spear technique of Olympus from his master Chiron.

He crossed the wind and showed himself while holding a spear.

< Episode 47 – The fastest one (2) > End

Episode 48/Chapter 1: The fastest one #2 (1)

The residence of Idun was peaceful.

That was because the members of the legion had received an order to stay behind in Valhalla to defend it while waiting in the residence. Their commander Tae Ho had also received the order to be on standby.

The hundred newly entered lowest ranked warriors were doing basic training under Scathach's lead in the training grounds that McLaren grounded down.

Scathach didn't differentiate from men and women. It wasn't because she ignored the qualities of each warrior or the differences in their physique.

It was because when you started to accumulate runes, the physical abilities became meaningless except for really special cases like Bracky.

The princess of Kataron Helga, who was in the front line, concentrated on her training while sweating like rain. Her swordsmanship using a sword and a shield was as simple as her personality but it was also solid with few flaws.

The scene of a hundred warriors doing basic training in a single place was a really grand sight.

And on top of that, the skills of each warrior were all outstanding as they had managed to enter Valhalla.

If it was a gathering only of people that sweated you would have felt hot just by looking at them but as it was a joint training between the ones that were called for having superior skills, you felt something rising in your chest on its own.

Because of that Nidhogg looked at the training of the warriors with shining eyes.

At first she tried to imitate them but she fell alone even when walking on a flat ground. As she kept repeating the process of falling and pawing in the air she just decided to watch in the end.

It was really cute to see Nidhogg looking at them under the shade while placing her chin on her hands but Scathach just glanced at her.

Actually, Nidhogg should be training on the origin mystical magic instead of watching.

The reason she obtained freedom was because of Tae Ho.

The dispatchment of an investigation team with Tae Ho as the captain.

You couldn't know when Tae Ho would use a summoning rock to call Adenmaha or Nidhogg. Actually, the probabilities for him calling Nidhogg were really low now that she had lost her magical body but the 'just in case' always existed.

If he called her when she had spent her magic power completely she would really become luggage for Tae Ho.

Nidhogg seemed happy to have been excluded from the harsh training but it was different for Adenmaha who was sitting next to her.

She was acting calm for Nidhogg, but the anxiety in her eyes couldn't be hidden.

She was worried about Tae Ho.

Only ten days had passed since he defeated the Magician King and the World Wolf.

It was too short. He lacked rest to completely recover.

Something else bothered her on top of that.

The Valkyries that didn't return from Olympus. Rasgrid had got her signal cut off in the path leading to Olympus.

She was uneasy. She felt like something big was about to happen.

She didn't feel like resting even though she was as she thought that Tae Ho may be in danger.

If Adenmaha could choose between receiving a harsher training and Tae Ho's safety she would choose to train without hesitation.

"Adenmaha, are you hurt somewhere?"

Nidhogg tilted her head and asked. Nidhogg got really bright while staying with Tae Ho's group but there were times that she still showed uneasiness and fright.

Because of that Adenmaha forced a bright smile.

"No, I'm not. Something just bothers me."

She couldn't not lie completely as Nidhogg wasn't a fool. She was unexpectedly quick witted perhaps because of the time she spent with Ratatoskr.

Nidhogg pouted her lips slightly at Adenmaha's words and was depressed but then put on a smile. She pointed at the direction of the wooden dock and asked.

"Do you know if Tae Ho master will be late today?"

Adenmaha always brightened when they talked about Tae Ho and Nidhogg herself also wanted to see him.

But contrary to Nidhogg's expectation, Adenmaha spoke with a rather dark expression.

"He may not come today."

It was quite far between Asgard and Olympus. In addition there was no way the search for Rasgrid would go smoothly. There was also the possibility he would stay outside for more than a month.

Nidhogg was depressed once again at Adenmaha's answer and then turned to look at the restaurant.

"I can't see Heda."

“She’s a bit busy today.”

Heda was also in stanby just like Adenmaha and Nidhogg were, waiting for Tae Ho’s call.

Now that she had awoken Idun’s personality she didn’t stay in the restaurant or the lodging like usual but was in the shrine.

She didn’t speak with her but Heda would be feeling the same way as her.

‘How many people are you going to make feel bad really.’

Adenmaha blamed him inwardly but it was only for a moment.

‘He will be fine. Master is strong. He even defeated the Magician king and the World Wolf.’

Tae Ho that said he would protect Adenmaha on the boat heading to Vanaheim. He, who didn’t fall back even by one step in front of the ferocious attacks of the Magician king and protected her.

Her resentment could only melt like snow. She felt her heart beat just by thinking of what happened on that day.

‘I’m also in a serious state.’

The self criticism that started with worry continued for so long. Nidhogg, who was looking at Adenmaha from a side, opened her arms and played affectionately.

Nidhogg played really affectionately with Tae Ho and Adenmaha. Scathach rebuked them saying that it would become a habit for her, but Adenmaha still thought of receiving Nidhogg’s affection.

Since the affection she couldn’t receive would be overwhelming, Adenmaha thought that at least she would receive her.

But it was when she hugged her.

She felt like she was the one getting hugged rather than being the one that gave it because of the height difference but it seemed like it wasn’t her misunderstanding.

“Are you fine now? I feel more relaxed after I do this.”

Nidhogg, who embraced Adenmaha, whispered in a low voice.

Only then did Adenmaha realize why Nidhogg had told her to hug her. Nidhogg didn't want to get embraced but she was the one that wanted to hug her.

Nidhogg was called the black dragon but her embrace was really warm. Adenmaha smirked and then answered while burying her head on Nidhogg's chest.

“I'm fine. Thank you Nidhogg.”

“Ehehe.”

Nidhogg carefully stroke Adenmaha's back and head just like Tae Ho usually did to her. She got courage and said in a low voice.

“You know, Nidhogg really likes Adenmaha.”

The words she couldn't say to Ratatoskr because she was afraid. The words that only had sharp words returned at her.

But Adenmaha was different. No, in the first place Nidhogg was also different because she liked Adenmaha for real compared to Ratatoskr who she had to force herself to like it.

“I also like you.”

Adenmaha answered gently. She had already heard this answer a few times but Nidhogg still felt her chest tear down. She was planning to console Adenmaha but felt like she was the one being consoled.

Nidhogg put on an almost teary face but then smiled brightly once again. She leaned on Adenmaha's body and her eyes started to close by its own.

“Adenmaha's embrace is really warm and soft.....slee.....py.....”

Nidhogg still slept a lot even after getting out of the roots as she spent most of the day sleeping when she was down the roots.

Adenmaha laughed unconsciously and patted her back.

“Wake.....me up.....when Tae Ho master comes.”

She was at her limit. Nidhogg entrusted her body to Adenmaha and her consciousness to the sleepiness.

Adenmaha looked at a distant place while still holding Nidhogg. Scathach was looking at them as if it was absurd and the warriors that were resting from their training put on good faces like they had seen something really nice.

Adenmaha flushed unconsciously and pouted but she couldn't throw away Nidhogg because of that. She looked at the direction where the dock was at.

‘Master.’

She called for Tae Ho.

&

‘He’s coming!’

Cuchulainn yelled the moment Achilles showed himself.

Actually, he looked at the group for a moment and then charged forward even before Cuchulainn could finish his sentence.

Achilles.

Tae Ho also knew this name.

The great hero of Troy that had the blood of the Goddess Thetis.

The man whose fame was right below Heracles's.

He was a warrior of Olympus. Just like Asgard took in the souls of the warriors of Midgard and rebirthed them as a warrior of Valhalla, Olympus returned to life the great warriors of the mortal world and placed them as the protectors of Olympus.

Achilles was a warrior of Zeus. Then, why had he massacred the warriors of Valhalla? Why was he attacking them?

Tae Ho didn't think about it. This wasn't the time to think.

Tae Ho moved the moment Achilles charged forward. He gripped Gae Bolg instead of pulling out a new sword. He grasped the target Achilles had with the insight of Scathach's techniques.

The one Achilles was aiming for was Ingrid.

Tae Ho was the strongest in the group. Bracky and Siri came next and Rasgrid was the strongest among the Valkyries.

In addition, Rasgrid gathered everyone's attention with her loud yelling, that's why she was eye catching. She wasn't a good target.

The weakest one.

And someone that wasn't receiving attention from their surroundings.

The one that was moving unnaturally as if she had received an injury.

All of these conditions pointed at Ingrid. He grasped that truth just by looking at the group for a moment and then charged towards her without hesitation.

It was a really fast charge. Bracky reacted but he couldn't see that Ingrid was his target so he couldn't do anything. Siri had also lost the timing.

Ingrid moved her hands hurriedly while watching Achilles charge towards her but it was too late. In addition, her hands were slower than usual because of the injury she had.

She would be stabbed.

It was when she thought that.

Paching!

Gae Bolg parried away Achilles' spear with a sharp sound. The moment Achilles' spear was parried it changed its trajectory. It slipped away from Tae Ho and Ingrid like thunder and appeared

far away.

Achilles glared at Tae Ho. Tae Ho covered Ingrid and glared back at Achilles.

He could feel some presences behind him, the aura of the strong beings that he sensed when he first sensed Achilles.

“They are Myrmidons! And there are 7 of them!”

Rasgrid yelled quickly.

The Myrmidons, who were Achilles’ elite forces, boasted of their individual strength but were experts in collective movement.

But Tae Ho didn’t turn to look at them. He cut off all his interest towards them.

He would leave them to Bracky and Siri. The two of them were more than enough to face them as they could be said to already be superior ranked warriors that only haven’t gone through the ceremony. In addition Rasgrid and Gandur weren’t luggage. They were also outstanding warriors.

[Saga: The eyes of the dragon sees through everything]

He looked at Achilles and more things than he expected entered his eyes.

[Commander of the Myrmidons]

[Prototype of Patroclus]

[Fake Achilles]

‘Indeed.’

A fake instead of the real one.

Patroclus was Achilles’ best friend who had worn his armor and helmet and pretended to be him in the war against Troy.

He didn’t know much about Olympus but he felt like they would be able to recreate a fake Achilles if they had a strength similar to the saga.

‘He’s not an easy foe. Just by looking at his movement speed, he’s faster than you.’

Cuchulainn said in a low voice and Tae Ho agreed with him.

Achilles was the one that had the fastest feet among the heroes of Olympus.

Even if he was a fake, it was really obvious that he was still fast.

Then what could he do?

Would he use techniques or strength in front of an opponent using speed?

Tae Ho thought of another thing.

He changed his stance holding Gae Bolg and activated his saga.

[Saga: Equipment of the dragon knight]

The Warrior’s equipment changed once again when the synchro rate passed 80%. The only things that weren’t strengthened were the sagas related to Valkyries.

[Boots of speed]

[Ghost dancer]

[Zephyr headband]

[Frost dragon armor]

[Necklace of gale]

Five kinds of equipment appeared over Tae Ho’s body. They were all used by Kalsted in Dark Age and they shared another similarity besides that.

The movement speed and attack speed option.

The setting that makes you quicker while ignoring all the other aspects. The extreme movement setting.

The fake Achilles charged forward but at that moment Tae Ho also charged at him.

‘What?!’

Cuchulainn was bewildered. He cursed once again saying that it wasn’t a saga but a cheat and laughed.

The fake Achilles became a gale. He moved at an overwhelming speed.

But Tae Ho didn’t fall behind to him even by a little.

Faster than a gale.

Tae Ho’s movements started to overwhelm Achilles’.

< Episode 48 – The fastest one #2 > End

Episode 48/Chapter 2: The fastest one #2 (2)

Tae Ho's movement speed was faster than superior ranked warriors now that he had climbed to the top rank by investing his runes uniformly but he could be considered to be normal among top ranked warriors.

But that wasn't the case now.

His movement speed had increased by more than 60% as he had increased it by wearing an item setting that only increased your movement speed.

Cuchulainn was greatly amazed at Tae Ho's speed that was faster than gale. He looked at Tae Ho who had started to overwhelm the fake Achilles in speed and yelled.

'This crazy! Do you have another setting?!'

He obviously did.

But Tae Ho just focused on the opponent in front of him instead of answering.

Achilles was bewildered. He could only be so.

Because Achilles was really fast, his movement speed was said to be faster even than Heracles and was like a real gale.

Achilles tried to shake off Tae Ho with straight lines, but with irregular patterns couldn't shake him off in the end.

The few seconds before Cuchulainn could even finish his sentence.

Achilles started to use his unique footwork to increase his movement speed even more.

But it didn't matter. Tae Ho didn't stand still while his movement speed got faster.

[Saga: Idun's warrior]

[Saga: The charge of the warrior is like a storm]

Scathach's style wind slash.

His saga and Scathach's style techniques was used at the same time. It was impossible for the fake Achilles to get ahead of Tae Ho in speed.

'My warrior Tae Ho!'

"Kuo!"

Idun's call reached Tae Ho and at the same time Achilles let out a roar. He executed a strong stab with all his strength behind it instead of trying to beat Tae Ho in speed.

'Useless! Scathach's style techniques are invincible! Don't lose to mere styles like Chiron's! Tae Ho!'

If the great heroes of Olympus had Chiron as their great masters, Erin had Scathach.

In addition, Achilles was using a spear right now.

Scathach's style techniques could be applied on all sorts of weapons but she and her disciple, the strongest warrior Cuchulainn, used a spear.

He couldn't allow Tae Ho to fall behind in spearmanship.

Tae Ho also thought of the same thing. He saw through the attack of the fake Achilles with Scathach's style insight and read the trajectory of the attack with his 'eyes of the dragon'.

The spears seemed to lock but they parried each other.

A really loud sound exploded the moment the stab of the fake Achilles pierced the empty air.

But it didn't touch Tae Ho. He pushed his spear exquisitely instead of facing it head on and entered his range smoothly.

Scathach's style pushing a great mountain.

Tae Ho hit the chest of the fake Achilles with his free left hand. It

wasn't light at all. He let out a breathtaking sound at the heavy attack and got pushed away heavily. The fake Achilles had pulled back by himself the moment he got hit to lessen the impact.

Tae Ho didn't let him go that was starting to step back as if trying to escape.

The time Tae Ho spent learning Scathach's style techniques was a mere 2 years, but those weren't ordinary 2 years. In addition, Tae Ho had also learned Kalsted's techniques. .

Even if you entered the Tower of shadows, Scathach's style techniques weren't something a normal warrior could master in 2 years.

No, it was impossible even for the talented ones.

But Tae Ho had managed it. It wasn't because Scathach had inserted her techniques directly on his body and not because Cuchulainn was with him.

The techniques of the dragon knight Kalsted became the foundation and he built a house with Scathach's techniques on top of that.

There was no need to sleep or eat in the tower of shadows.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the 2 years Tae Ho accumulated in the tower of shadows was time purely spent fighting since he didn't sleep or eat so even warriors of Valhalla would be astounded by it. You could say that he had actually spent 10 years in it.

'His spearmanship has also deteriorated. His skills can't be compared to Achilles.'

Cuchulainn said. The fake Achilles was strong but he was only at the superior rank.

It wasn't logical that Tae Ho would be defeated by him now that he had climbed to the top rank.

A wave surged. It seemed like waves and gale were blowing together violently.

Fierce attacks were exchanged between Tae Ho and the fake Achilles while Cuchulainn added some more commentaries. Their attacks were so strong and fast that everytime their spears moved, the air screamed.

At first it was quite an equal exchange but at some point Tae Ho was the one that was attacking one sidedly. The fake Achilles focused solely on defense and his hands and feet started to tangle.

Rasgrid was shocked.

She did know that Tae Ho had gotten strong and defeated the Magician King and the World Wolf even though it was thanks to Loki sacrificing himself, but the feeling she got was different watching him directly. She could experience it first hand.

The fake Achilles was like a nightmare for Rasgrid. Several intermediate ranked warriors were massacred by him. Rasgrid resisted fiercely but he was like a wall she couldn't overcome.

But he was struggling against Tae Ho. Was being overwhelmed by him.

That is Idun's warrior.

The savior of Valhalla.

The one that would inherit everything from Erin!

"Thunder clap!"

Bracky let out a yell and swung his battle hammer. He had activated his saga so his already huge body became even bigger. He gave the feeling of a giant now.

The Myrmidon's split up in groups of three, two, two to face the group but it was the wrong option.

Bracky chose a simple yet effective method instead of getting caught in the attacks of the Myrmidons.

A strong blow.

Only one attack.

He created some distance with them and then poured out an attack filled with electricity.

The Myrmidons couldn't endure his attack. The three of them joined hands to block it.

Siri and Bracky fought in ways that were similar yet different. Siri was really fast after transforming into a wolf Goddess. She entered the blind spots of the Myrmidons and fired arrows consecutively so the Myrmidons couldn't even approach her properly.

The ones fighting a close fight were the remaining two but it was only for a moment.

The Myrmidons were the ones that started to get pushed back as Rasgrid joined Gandur and Ingrid.

“Kuoo!”

The fake Achilles let out another roar and then his aura suddenly strengthened.

‘Tae Ho!’

When Cuchulainn yelled and warned him Tae Ho had already taken preparations. The ‘eyes of the dragon’ didn't miss the sudden changes.

And he realized.

He couldn't know the logic behind it but he understood what had happened in front of him through his senses.

The real Achilles.

His consciousness was loaded in the fake Achilles. It was only for a moment but the real Achilles tried to show his skills that surpassed the fake's.

The Hero killer spear.

The secret of Achilles that had succumbed a lot of heroes in the war of Troy!

An overwhelming strength was contained at the tip of his spear. It was so strong and rough that anyone that saw it would get absent minded.

But Tae Ho didn't miss him. Scathach's style techniques didn't allow that.

The 'eyes of the dragon' gathering of his aura and Scathach's style techniques found its weakness.

He dug into him sharply right before his technique got completed!

Kalsted's style Meteor stab.

It was more like a Lance charge rather than a normal stab.

In addition it was fast. It completely dispersed Achilles' attack!

The sky and the ground shook at the same time. It was the result of the world shaking due to the a strong technique being dispersed by the shock of an even faster and sharper technique.

Bewilderment appeared in the face of the fake Achilles-no, Achilles. A conspicuous color appeared in his eyes.

How?

No, just who are you?

Tae Ho didn't plan to answer. The moment he dispersed Achilles' Hero killer spear, he let go of Gae Bolg. He then took out Arondight from the air and executed an attack.

The chest of the fake Achilles got slashed. He vomited out black blood and Tae Ho glared at him for a moment instead of executing another attack.

Achilles spoke through the mouth of the fake Achilles.

“We will meet again, successor of Scathach.”

Tae Ho swung Arondight and cut off the head of the fake Achilles.

‘Tae Ho. My warrior Tae Ho!’

Idun yelled urgently when the head rolled on the ground. Idun’s voice was heard dimmer than usual and her voice got cut off at parts, maybe because of the connection that existed between Asgard and Olympus.

Tae Ho focused on Idun and she spoke quickly once again.

‘The path is closing. You should get away qui....no, it’s already too late! Call Adenmaha and Rolo! Quickly!’

Idun wasn’t a battle God but was a Goddess of a high stature even in Asgard. She could feel a strong divine power trying to cover the entire path.

It wasn’t a strength that got activated at the moment. It was already prepared long time ago and that’s why she couldn’t stop it.

The path was long. Even if Tae Ho was fast, it was impossible for him to return to Asgard before that force covered the path.

What could she do then?

How would she be able to help Tae Ho?

The answer Idun came up with at the desperate moment was that she would assist him with more strength.

Tae Ho followed Idun’s words and fulfilled her wish instead of asking. Because she was Tae Ho’s Goddess. Each and every action of hers was for Tae Ho.

“Adenmaha! Rolo!”

Tae Ho gripped the summoning rocks and yelled.

Rolo appeared while holding a fish with his mouth. Adenmaha got summoned over him and fell with her butt on top of him.

“Master?”

But it wasn't only Adenmaha. Nidhogg was also with her as she was in her embrace.

“Ugh...Tae Ho master?”

She spoke with an absent minded voice as if she had just woken up.

The summoning rock was only limited to the summoned objective but Nidhogg was also an existence that was a subordinate of Tae Ho.

It seemed like he was able to summon the two of them as they were holding each other.

‘Tae Ho! Be careful! Valhalla will go to help soon!’

‘Tae Ho!’

Idun's and Heda's voices were heard. Tae Ho's connection to them got cut off even before he could answer.

Tae Ho raised his head. Bracky also looked up at the sky after crushing the Myrmidon warriors.

A golden light.

A strong divine power covered the path and swept everything in it.

&

It was a mess.

The moment the power of a God poured down, Adenmaha held Nidhogg tighter as if she was a mother embracing her child.

Tae Ho moved. He rode on the confused Rolo and released his power of a God the most he could and covered his surroundings.

Everything was chaos after that.

He felt like he could hear the voice of someone in the middle of

the surging whirlpool of divine power. He moved desperately toward the voice that seemed like it was calling to him.

And how much time had passed after that?

Tae Ho opened his eyes again and realized that he was inside a big cave.

Rolo was lying down behind him unconscious and Nidhogg and Adenmaha were lying on Rolo while still holding each other. The two of them were also unconscious.

“Bracky! Siri! Ingrid!”

He just yelled for now and looked at his surroundings.

Fortunately, all of them were inside the cave. Bracky was lying down while extending all his limbs and Siri was lying down in his arm. Rasgrid was also lying down in her folded cape.

‘Tae Ho, are you okay? You aren’t hurt anywhere?’

‘I’m fine.’

Tae Ho briefly answered Cuchulainn’s question and checked his surroundings hurriedly. He activated the ‘eyes of the dragon’ and leaned his ears, and then the sound of footsteps was heard not far from him.

“Are you awake?”

It was a refined sweet voice.

Tae Ho looked at the owner of the voice. There were green words on top of his head instead of red ones.

[Lion of Athena]

[Patroclus]

He wasn’t the fake Achilles and not a prototype but the real one.

“My name is Patroclus. I was going to Asgard to notify of the emergency in Olympus.”

The danger in Olympus.

The attack of Achilles.

The connection with Idun that got severed just like the time he was down to the roots.

‘I have an ominous feeling.’

Cuchulainn said and Tae Ho agreed. He expressed etiquette to Patroclus, that was putting an anxious face and introduced himself.

< Episode 48 – The fastest one #2 (2) > End

Episode 49/Chapter 1: The Goddess of warfare Athena (1)

Several Gods existed in Olympus just like it was the case for Asgard and Erin.

Gods that were close to being fairies.

The small Gods that were born with holy power by receiving the blood of Gods but weren't treated as such.

The ones that became underlings of a strong God and received a portion of their divine power and fame.

The ones that were originally human but raised great merits and became middle Gods.

If you counted all of them they easily surpassed the hundreds and the thousands.

Gods that possessed real strength existed among them.

The 12 Gods of Olympus.

Gods that had a big influence in the mortal world and also in all of Olympus.

At the front was certainly the king of Gods Zeus.

He, who swung the sacred lightning that was called the wrath of the sky, possessed more strength than the remaining 12 Gods together and he was really someone suitable to be called king of Gods.

The other 12 Gods excluding Zeus were like this.

Zeus' partner and protector of families Hera, the God of the sea Poseidon, the Goddess of the grain, the God of light Apollo, the Goddess of the hunt and the moon Artemis, The Goddess of beauty and love Aphrodite, The God of war Ares, the Goddess of warfare Athena, the God of metalworking Hephaestus, the God of

communication Hermes, the God of wine Dionysus.

But of course, there were Gods that were stronger than them.

The owner of the underworld Hades and his consort Persephone, the Goddess of the hearth Hestia that gave up her seat as one of the Twelve Olympians in favor of Dionysus, the God of the sun Helios, etc.

The reason there were so many Gods in Olympus was simple.

Olympus still hadn't faced a huge scaled war unlike Erin and Asgard.

Even though a thousand years had passed since the world was made, it maintained its structure without any big changes.

That was why Olympus was strong.

It possessed incomparable strength that Erin and Asgard couldn't compare to.

&

Idun was running right now. There were few cases that she left her sanctum where the golden apple tree was at. It was because Heda woke up in her stead whenever she got out of her sanctum.

But it was different this time. She didn't have the leisure to wake up Heda and change bodies. She was just filled with thoughts that she had to run faster.

Idun was heading to Freya. The Valkyries of Freya's legion were bewildered at the sudden visit but Idun didn't make a proper explanation to them, even though they were asking the reason for her visit. She just said that she had to meet Freya and headed to her palace.

She felt like her chest would burst.

Tae Ho's connection was cut off by force. This wasn't the first time it happened. It was the second time and that's why she felt all the more anxious.

The fear she felt when the connection got cut off at the first time was starting to come back.

‘It will be fine. The situation is different from then.’

Heda said. Idun also knew this. The first time the connection got cut was really the worst.

Tae Ho was eaten by the World Wolf and the connection got cut. It was a situation where it was logical to think that he was dead.

She didn’t believe it later but at first Idun also thought that Tae Ho had died. That’s why she had fallen in a nasty despair.

Idun forced herself to breathe calmly. Heda spoke once again with the voice she managed to squeeze out.

‘The situation is different. He won this time and he didn’t get eaten either. We also know where he is. The connection between Asgard and Olympus has been severed, that’s all.’

That was the case. Tae Ho had won against the fake Achilles and didn’t get sent to another place.

But they couldn’t feel relieved.

Why did the connection get severed?

Why did the fake Achilles attack Tae Ho and the Valkyries?

They felt an uneasy feeling and the cause for that was in the strong divine power that closed down the path.

Idun could sense who it belonged to. She wanted to deny the truth but she couldn’t.

Why? For what!

“Freya-nim has said that she will meet you immediately.”

A Valkyrie of Freya’s legion said. It was a Valkyrie she knew the face of. Hrist. It was the Valkyrie that had the highest rank among the ones serving Freya.

Idun calmed her troubled face and took a deep breath once again.

She calmed down herself but couldn't stop the tears from flowing down.

Only ten days had passed. It hadn't even been fifteen days.

The fierce battle that occurred in Valhalla.

The battle he put his life at stake by facing the Magician King and the World Wolf.

It was too short. The time Tae Ho could relax and rest and the time they could spend together.

Compared to Heda and Freya who thought that Idun was one independent Goddess, Idun thought that she was Heda's assistant. Because of that, she had always suppressed her emotions by standing behind.

That's why she felt more pained than Heda. She couldn't endure the burst of emotions.

Idun clenched her chest and gulped down the grief and at that moment the door to Freya's room opened.

Freya showed herself.

"Idun."

Freya called for her. She looked at her messy face and embraced her instead of asking what had happened.

It was warm. That's why she couldn't suppress her emotions anymore.

Idun burst in tears. She explained what had happened to Tae Ho while crying.

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"I will introduce myself once again. My name is Patroclus. I'm the lion of Athena-nim that received an order to notify Asgard of the danger Olympus is facing."

Rasgrid held her breath for a moment at Patroclus' introduction

and glanced at Tae Ho. Tae Ho nodded and asked as everyone's representative.

“Patroclus, can you tell us what happened in Olympus? And also about why the great hero of Olympus Achilles attacked us.”

He hadn't seen wrong. The one that had attacked the Valkyries and the warriors of Valhalla suddenly was Achilles and the warriors that had appeared to assist him were the Myrmidons.

Patroclus nodded instead of making an excuse. He spoke with a calm voice once again.

“I will tell you everything one by one. First, the one that attacked us was really my best friend Achilles. Precisely speaking, it's a copy of mine that was created by Pygmalion and is controlled by Achilles....you can say that it's a kind of puppet. I have an ability to borrow Achilles' appearance and strength for a moment.”

That was the reason Achilles had the name of Patroclus prototype.

Tae Ho frowned at Patroclus' explanation. It was because there may be more fake Achilles's that had the strength of a superior ranked warrior but also because he heard a familiar name.

‘What? Is there something weird?’

‘No, it's fine.’

Pygmalion.

The sculptor that loved the sculpture he made too much.

The story that Aphrodite gave life to the sculpture because she was moved by his devoted love was a really famous story.

‘It was one of the few happy endings in Greek mythology.’

Tae Ho himself also liked this story but the story wasn't the important thing now. In addition, there was a high probability the Pygmalion Tae Ho knew of was different to the real one just like the several characters of Erin and Asgard.

Tae Ho concentrated on Patroclus once again and he opened his mouth right in time.

“Achilles had originally come to stop me.”

“Are you saying to stop you from transmitting the news to Asgard?”

“That’s right. In that time, I encountered your troop of warriors and battle occurred. Achilles would have wanted to hide that he had infiltrated Asgard.”

Patroclus answered Rasgrid’s words and paused for a moment. Rasgrid felt regret at his depressed look but they weren’t in a situation to wait and understand everything.

“So you came to this place. To trick Achilles’ eyes for a moment.”

“Just like you said. Achilles will think that I headed to Asgard.....so I thought that he won’t find me for some time if I headed to Olympus.”

“We have been a nuisance.”

Rasgrid bowed. The reason Patroclus revealed himself was to rescue Rasgrid.

“No, how could I leave you behind when you were dying? Also, in an aspect all of this is Olympus’ fault. It’s not your fault at all. In addition, I would have been discovered immediately even if I didn’t rescue you and kept going.”

Patroclus shook his hands. There was a deep anxiety and guilt in his eyes.

“Patroclus, did an internal problem occur in Olympus?”

Adenmaha asked in a low voice. Patroclus closed his eyes tightly and answered.

“That’s right. It’s not the Gigantomakhia but an internal problem.”

Gandur and Ingrid kept silent. They had already expected this answer but they felt gloomy when they heard it for real.

But this wasn't all.

Rasgrid forced herself to talk and mentioned one fact she couldn't say it out loud.

"The divine power that closed the path....Does it really belong to that person? That person.....Asgard's.....no, did they become enemies of the ones wanting to maintain the world?"

Her voice trembled. It was unavoidable.

Because the divine power that closed the path belonged to that person.

The absolute being that was above all the other Gods.

The king of Gods that was stronger than the other 12 Gods together.

Zeus.

It was him. The divine power belonged to him. You could only experience his divine power if you visited Olympus at least once as it remained in several parts of Olympus.

"It's not only him."

Patroclus said. He was rather calm. But that's why his despair showed even more. Even Nidhogg who didn't know the God that was mentioned put on a scared face and embraced Adenmaha.

"Most of the 12 Gods including Zeus have become existences that wish for the destruction of their world. They ended up becoming our enemies."

Rasgrid closed her eyes and Gandur cursed out.

"What about the others?"

Ingrid barely managed to ask. It was important to know why they had suddenly changed sides but what they needed most to grasp

the situation was the number of Gods that had turned their backs.

Patroclus answered with a dark expression.

“The certain thing is Athena-nim and the queen of Gods Hera-nim, that have sent me. I don’t know about the others precisely.”

Merely 2 among 12.

Patroclus had used the expression ‘most of them’. They would still have to listen to the story a bit more but it was certain that more than half of them had turned their backs.

And what that meant.

The meaning that had having Zeus and the others turn into ones wanting to destroy the world.

“A war between Asgard and Olympus.”

Tae Ho said.

Patroclus nodded.

“It’s not that far. It will begin on the day Zeus takes control over all of Olympus.”

A war between a world and another one.

Tae Ho closed his eyes. He thought of Idun’s and Heda’s face which he saw before the connection got severed.

< Episode 49 – The Goddess of warfare Athena (1) > End

Episode 49/Chapter 2: The Goddess of warfare Athena (2)

“This story should be too sudden and bewildering. I understand. I would have shown the same reaction if I had heard the same thing from another person. That’s why if you have any doubts, you can just ask me. I will do my best to answer.”

Patroclus spoke with a serious tone. It didn’t look like he was intending to do it but his actions and peculiar way of talking made him look like a scene from a movie.

The Valkyries exchanged glances quickly. Gandur and Ingrid nodded and Rasgrid turned to look at Tae Ho. He nodded at her gaze that seemed like she was asking for permission.

“Patroclus, first of all we apologize that we were late on our introductions. I’m Valkyrie Rasgrid of Odin’s legion. I’m really grateful you came to rescue me.”

Rasgrid stood up and lightly hit her chest with her right hand. The two of them hadn’t even exchanged names because the situation flowed too hurriedly.

Patroclus politely responded to her etiquette and Rasgrid introduced Tae Ho immediately after that.

“This is the commander of Idun’s legion, Lee Tae Ho-nim.”

“I’m Idun’s warrior Lee Tae Ho.”

Tae Ho also expressed good etiquette. Gandur stood up after him and said.

“I’m Gandur a Valkyrie of Ullr’s legion. And this is Ingrid of Njord’s Valkyrie.”

Ingrid was sweating struggling compared to the relatively fine Gandur. Her injuries hadn’t healed completely but Zeus’ divine power outside of the cave was giving her a bad influence.

Adenmaha stood up while Gandur protected Ingrid.

“I’m Adenmaha a Valkyrie of Idun’s legion. This is Nidhogg of my same legion and this is Rolo.”

Nidhogg bowed down. Rolo just glanced at Patroclus like he didn’t care and then dropped his body once again.

Rasgrid opened her mouth once again when the simple self introductions ended.

“Patroclus, I will ask something taking into account that what you have said is all true. What is the reason Zeus-nim and the other Gods turned to the side of the ones wanting to destroy the world?”

The fact itself was really shocking but they had to look over it.

Patroclus frowned at Rasgrid’s question and answered while dropping his shoulders.

“I don’t know either.”

“What?”

Gandur raised her voice. Patroclus let out a sigh at her eyes asking if he was kidding.

“I understand how you feel but I don’t know the reason. Only, Athena-nim said this, that Zeus may still be fighting.”

He spoke of something without much sense but that wasn’t the case for Adenmaha. The clever valkyrie tilted her head slightly and asked.

“Fight? With himself to prevent himself from turning into someone wanting to destroy the world?”

Nidhogg blinked and imagined Heda and Idun fighting but it was a wrong example.

Patroclus nodded and said.

“I’m not sure of it but Athena has taken that possibility into account.”

Zeus who was someone that wanted to maintain the world but turned into wanting to destroy it.

But he hadn't changed completely. There was a process in which he changed and Zeus was still resisting the change.

You could interpret several things with this. If what was mentioned was true, then Zeus wasn't changing by his own will.

"Can't you tell us in more detail? Like the reason why Hera-nim and Athena-nim are certainly Gods that haven't turned their backs?"

Gandur calmed down her excitement and asked in a low voice.

She had the most rushed temperament among the Valkyries gathered in this place but it didn't mean that she was foolish. She was also an experienced and capable Valkyrie.

"I don't exactly know when the change started but the noticeable changes occurred about two months ago."

'It's a similar time to when Asgard started to get shaken off. It's too coincidental to call it one....but we have no reason to say that it wasn't coincidence.'

Cuchulainn said in a low voice. Just like he had said, there was no way to know if it was simple coincidence or if there really was a connection.

Patroclus continued speaking.

"There was a big change in the sky of Olympus. A loud sound and explosions occurred in the palace where the Gods resided at....and it's a bit disrespectful to say this but Zeus started to run wild."

Patroclus closed his eyes tightly as if he was afraid just with imagining what had happened.

"The lightning of wrath covered the entire mountain of Olympus and many people residing in Olympus lost their lives."

The fairies and lesser Gods.

The ones that got permission to live in the mountain of Olympus by the Gods.

“I was outside Olympus that day so I could evade the wrath. Precisely speaking, I was out and was returning and I saw it on that day. That the queen of Gods Hera used her strength desperately to try to stop Zeus-nim. The clash made by the strongest God and his wife created an explosion and it shook the entire mountain of Olympus.”

He couldn't see until the end. It was because he got swept in one of the explosions and lost consciousness.

“Everything ended when I regained consciousness. The mountain of Olympus that was filled with fresh verdure was filled with death and despair and the usually bright sky got dyed in ash gray.”

Bracky and Siri thought of Erin at the word ash gray. The sky and ground of the destroyed Erin was completely ash gray.

“Athena barely managed to escape the mountain of Olympus with a serious injury. I also followed her at that time and left the mountain.”

That was the reason Patroclus mentioned Hera and Athena as Gods that hadn't changed.

“The mountain of Olympus isn't the only thing that changed. First, the sea started to change and then the ground did. Almost half of the world turned that way in only two months.”

Patroclus finished his story with a voice filled with sorrow and then looked at the Valkyries once again. Rasgrid spoke with a face as if she had eaten something sour.

“The proof that Zeus has become someone wanting to destroy the world is the testimony of Athena-nim.”

What Patroclus had seen was the crazy Zeus, not Zeus that claimed that he had changed sides.

In the end, the only thing that could be called to be a proof was Athena's claim.

Patroclus smiled bitterly.

"She is a Goddess of another world. It's obvious to be doubtful about her even though it's disrespectful for us. But you will realize it when you get out of the path and enter Olympus. Some kind of aura filled up the changed land. That land resembles Tartarus, the land of the titans."

It was a place like Jotunheim if it was compared to Asgard.

"Just like you have felt it earlier, the divine power that cut off the path belongs to Zeus-nim. Athena-nim had already predicted this outcome and this also means that its proof that Zeus-nim is still fighting."

Patroclus pointed at the direction of the entrance of the cave. It was a merciless and cruel divine power that didn't even have a hint of gentleness.

Adenmaha returned to the point once again.

"Because he wouldn't be wasting time like this if he had completely switched sides?"

"That's exactly the case. Olympus hasn't changed completely even though it is changing quickly. I wonder if the reason he cut off the path to Asgard was also to buy time."

Gandur also nodded. She licked her lower lip as if organizing her thoughts and said.

"So it's something like this? Zeus turned to become someone that wanted to destroy the world because of an unknown reason but he hasn't changed completely. He's holding himself back from completely turning. But the change is still taking place and at some point Zeus and all of Olympus will become beings that want to destroy the world. And when that happens, the war between Asgard and Olympus will take place."

“That’s right. Athena-nim also said that.”

It was a clean summary.

Tae Ho thought over the story.

‘So Olympus will become Jotunheim.’

The giants of Jotunheim were certainly beings that wanted to destroy the world but they didn’t want to ruin it by themselves.

If Olympus turned to become like Jotunheim, it wouldn’t be weird for them to attack Asgard.

Even if they prioritized the destruction of Olympus, there was a high probability that the forces would go to war with the ones wanting to maintain the world of another world just like it was the case for the fomoires after the destruction of Erin.

‘The Kingdom of Fire.’

The existence of the association he heard from Ragnar gave persuasiveness to the story.

Tae Ho could understand why the Magician King didn’t cut the path leading to Olympus.

“If all of this is true....who is the one behind it?”

Gandur said in a low voice. She spoke as if asking it to herself.

“Not even the Magician King could do something like this and that was the same for the king of fomoires.”

‘The Kingdom of Fire.’

Tae Ho thought of them once again.

But they were mere probabilities. He couldn’t be certain of it yet.

‘But if it’s really their doing.....’

This could also happen in Asgard.

‘I know what you are thinking about but don’t rush it. Asgard and Olympus are different just like Erin and Asgard are different.

There are two big groups divided in beings wanting to destroy the world and maintain it but the roots of the Gods of Olympus and Asgard is different. That also goes for the Titans of Jotunheim with the giants.'

Cuchulainn spoke quickly. He didn't lose his sharp insight suitable of a master of Scathach's style techniques.

Tae Ho also nodded. There were still many things he didn't know about the current situation. He needed more information.

"If your doubts have been cleared to a certain extent....I think that we should leave this place first."

Patroclus looked at Ingrid. It wasn't as much as Adenmaha or Nidhogg but she hadn't been a Valkyrie for long like Rasgrid or Gandur.

In addition, she was a Valkyrie that was originally a Shield maiden. Her capacity to resist her own divine power or from others could only be weak compared to Rasgrid, who was Odin's direct daughter.

Gandur carefully caressed Ingrid's pale cheek.

And it wasn't only because of Ingrid. If they didn't hurry, the path would completely close and they wouldn't be able to return to Olympus.

"Do you know somewhere we can hide?"

Patroclus smiled bitterly at Adenmaha's question.

"There's a place I hid for a moment before heading to Asgard. And for now.....i'm planning to return to Athena-nim."

He had failed his job of notifying Asgard of the danger. Now that it turned out like this, he just hoped that some other person succeeded in his job.

Tae Ho thought of Idun once again. If it was Idun and Heda, they would have determined the general situation to some extent even

if it wasn't to the point of the story they heard from Patroclus.

'It seems like the best we can do now is to help Athena.'

Cuchulainn's words were right. Tae Ho stood up from his place and said that he would help Patroclus.

"I understand. Follow me then. The path is harsh so be careful."

Patroclus forced a smile and then moved deeper into the cave rather than the entrance.

Gandur grabbed Ingrid with both of her arms and approached Rolo. Rolo put an expression as if he couldn't do anything about it and carried Ingrid in his back calmly.

It was when the group was about to depart. At that moment Adenmaha hesitated for a bit but then asked Patroclus in a low voice.

"Um, I'm asking because I don't know much. But is that person called Athena-nim a Goddess?"

Patroclus was bewildered at the absurd question but then nodded and answered.

Gandur, Rasgrid and Ingrid smiled bitterly at the same time and Bracky started to laugh. Siri shook her head and only Adenmaha opened her eyes sharply.

"Why are you asking that?"

Adenmaha glanced at Tae Ho as he asked her about the question and snorted.

"Are you really asking that?"

What answer did he have for times like these?

'It's your retribution. Karma.'

Cuchulainn clicked his tongue and Tae Ho just stayed silent.

And after walking some more steps.

Tae Ho looked at Adenmaha taking care of Nidhogg and moved his fingers in the air. He checked the list of sagas he possessed.

[Saga: The warrior that had a Goddess meet him]

[Idun]

[Freya]

[Heda]

[Adenmaha]

[Nidhogg]

...

Idun wasn't a Valkyrie compared to Freya as she could be considered to be one because she was a commander of the Valkyries. Because of that Idun wasn't registered until now.

But that wasn't the case anymore.

Her name was added to the list as the name of the saga changed.

Then, what would happen with a God of another world?

'Hey, what are you thinking about? It feels like you are plotting something.'

Tae Ho didn't answer at Cuchulainn's sharp question. It was because he would have to meet her first no matter the case.

Olympus.

The neighboring world of Asgard.

Tae Ho's steps quickened.

< Episode 49 – The Goddess of warfare Athena (2) > End

Episode 49/Chapter 3: The Goddess of warfare Athena (3)

The battle at the north was at its climax.

The army being led by Thor was pushing back the army of Harmarti.

Harmarti's forces resisted fiercely but it was only a matter of time. The front lines moved north every day and the front lines that were maintained for more than a hundred years weren't that far away from Jotunheim.

Odin's army, which regrouped with Thor's army last night, was waiting in the rear to act as reserve forces.

The crow Hugin that was sitting on Odin's shoulder raised its head. There was an unfamiliar existence among the crows gathered in this place.

There was a white cat with small wings in its back.

The cat ran swiftly in the air threw itself towards Odin. Odin, who was already aware of the existence of the cat, moved his hand swiftly even before Hugin could whisper him something.

It was Freya's pet. Odin held the cat with one of his hands and then touched the forehead of the cat lightly and closed his eyes. Freya's face appeared in his head then.

'Odin.'

There was a deep anxiety showing in the beautiful face of Freya. Odin asked with a low voice with eyes closed.

"Freya. Did something happen?"

'It's too long to explain. I will send you a memory.'

A new rune appeared in the forehead of the cat Odin was holding. Odin received Freya's divine power naturally and frowned.

“This is troublesome.”

The path was completely sealed by Zeus’ divine power.

In addition, the great hero of Olympus Achilles attacked the warriors and Valkyries of Valhalla.

Freya bit her lips at Odin’s calm voice.

‘Odin, this isn’t something that simple. I’m sure something happened in Olympus.’

The 30 Valkyries of Hermod’s legion that headed to Olympus never returned and something similar occurred now.

It was the worst situation but they would have to investigate why Olympus had become their enemies.

“Did you mobilize the defense forces?”

‘Ragnar is leading the warriors and heading to the path for now. But just like you know, the number of our forces is low. The reinforcements of the Temple that hadn’t returned yet also went there but.....’

The battle against the Magician King was still fresh for Freya.

In addition, the force Ragnar went out with was really too small. It was because in the first place, more than half of the forces that remained in Valhalla followed Odin.

“We will take out part of our forces and send them with Tir so don’t decrease the defenses anymore than you have.’

‘I won’t.’

The fact that Tir would be leading them comforted her. The God of valor Tir was one of the most skilled fighters among the several children Odin had.

Odin paused for a moment and asked Freya as she showed a relieved expression.

“Is the return of Idun’s warrior far away?”

Idun had last seen Tae Ho getting caught in the path.

Freya bit her lips and said with a bitter expression.

‘Ragnar said that he would check things when he arrived....but the path itself was closed. We will need some time to open it up forcefully.’

Even if they managed to open it, what came next was also a problem. The great army of Olympus may face against the army of Asgard.

“Idun’s warrior.....and one warrior that Thor and Ullr each treasure.”

‘And five Valkyries. There are Adenmaha and Nidhogg of Idun’s legion....and Rasgrid.’

One top ranked warrior and two superior ranked warriors.

He was with three experienced Valkyries but also one battle Valkyrie that worked well with Idun’s warrior.

Freya and Odin didn’t think of Nidhogg as a force but she still possessed strong magic power and divinity even without her armored body. She would certainly be of help somehow.

“How is Idun?”

‘She calmed down a bit...but she’s quite unstable.’

Actually Freya cared more for Idun than Heda. It was because she felt pity for her as she always hid her emotions and acted as Heda’s assistant.

“Idun’s warrior will be fine. He’s not someone that will die easily.”

‘Odin!’

Freya also agreed to it but his words were too casual. But Odin said something else instead of expressing remorse.

“So he already went through the top ranked ceremony.”

‘Right before he departed.’

“You did well. The difference between having and not having a divinity is bigger than you think.”

In addition, a divinity would grow bigger in harsh environments.

Freya let out a sigh once again.

‘Odin, you aren’t going to return?’

“Harmarti will notice the changes if I move rashly. So wait for a few days.”

They couldn’t exactly know the situation in Olympus so they couldn’t end it with temporary measures. Odin had to go the path directly and check the situation for himself.

‘Come quickly.’

“I will try my best.”

Odin smiled bitterly and stroked Freya’s head like he would stroke a cat. He opened his eyes calmly and sent the cat flying to the sky.

“Idun’s warrior.”

Odin whispered his name and thought of Tae Ho’s face.

Odin’s benefactor and the savior of Asgard. The real successor of Erin that would inherit everything from it.

He had now acquired a divinity. It was a small divinity that didn’t even have a deity but it was always momentary.

And one more thing.

The arrangements Odin had set just in case.

‘Be safe.’

He couldn’t even thank him properly for having rescued Asgard. This was taking the worst situation into consideration but Odin was thinking of going to war with Olympus if it was to protect

Idun's warrior.

A victory cry burst out from the north. The lightning Thor generated was shaking the ground and the sky.

Odin looked at the north.

And then looked in the direction of Olympus.

&

The cave was longer and harsher than they thought.

The good thing was that the ceiling was quite high and the passageway was wide. Thanks to that even Rolo, who was quite big among gryphons, could follow the group without getting left behind.

Some time passed like that.

They advanced for close to three hours including the time they rested.

“We are almost at the exit. The sun will be setting when we get out.”

The cave still looked like it had no end but he wouldn't be saying that for nothing. Rasgrid lowered the light in her light rune that she was using as a torch and asked.

“Is there somewhere we can spend the night?”

It wouldn't be bad to spend a night in the cave if they were to camp outside anyways.

Gandur turned to look at Ingrid who was leaning on Rolo's back. It seemed like she was quite exhausted but she was better than before.

“I'm sleepy.....”

Nidhogg started to nod in a doze and mumbled. She couldn't even take her nap like usual so she was almost at her limit. She had been almost sleep walking until now.

“There are cities and villages near the path and the surroundings haven’t changed until now. But.....I can’t be certain of it now that the path is closed.”

The thing that closed down the path was none other than Zeus’ divine power. There was a possibility that part of the path changed.

“So anyways, it’s better if we hurry right?”

Adenmaha, who was supporting Nidhogg, summarized things. Patroclus, who was taking into account a chaser or the changes in their surroundings, wanted to leave the path as soon as possible.

“Well, we just have to walk all night then.”

Bracky spoke magnanimously and glanced at Adenmaha. The meaning behind his gaze was that he would carry Nidhogg if he had to.

“If we were to dodge cities and villages.....is there a road few with people? Somewhere like a forest or a mountain?”

Patroclus nodded at Siri’s question.

“I’m planning to use the forest road. Only.....there’s a small shrine near the forest that serves Apollo-nim. We still don’t know his state so we will move the farthest we can from it.”

Patroclus had moved while evading the shrines to go to Asgard.

“Let’s hurry if we have decided. We have to go a bit farther when the sun is still up.”

Everyone nodded as Tae Ho spoke last. When they climbed out by following Patroclus, an exit that had a complicated structure covered with bushes appeared.

The air changed as they got out of the cave. It was late in the afternoon just like Patroclus had said. It seemed like the sun would set in one more hour.

“This place is Olympus.....”

Tae Ho checked his surroundings and said in a low voice. The scene he was looking at right now was closer to Midgard than Asgard.

“The mountain of Olympus is over there.”

Patroclus pointed into the distance. They were able to see it as the exit of the cave was at a high place but the color of the sky changed at some borderline. The ash colored sky was close to black.

The path that had changed was connected with the world that changed but hadn't changed yet.

Because of that, Tae Ho could feel the difference Patroclus talked about immediately. The world beyond that boundary was close to Erin-no, you could feel despair and hopelessness beyond that.

“I will increase my speed a bit.”

Patroclus started to take the lead. The group climbed down the cliff and hurriedly hid their bodies in the forest that appeared.

They couldn't see the sky and outside the forest because big trees were covering them. Because of that the group decided to advance only looking at Patroclus' back.

After advancing like that for a bit. Gandur raised her voice in a region that the forest got cut coincidentally.

“Wait, the shrine you talked about. Isn't that it over there?”

The group turned to look at the same direction. There was a big shrine and a village surrounding it.

Patroclus said that the shrine was small but there would be at least a hundred people living in it.

But there was one more problem.

Flames and black smoke was surging from the shrine that resembled a relic of Greece and the village.

‘It’s not smoke from making food. They are under attack.’

There was no need to transmit Cuchulainn’s words. Everyone thought of the same thing.

“Let’s help them.”

“Let’s.”

“We have to.”

“It’s too dangerous as we don’t know the sit.....”

They were Bracky, Siri, Ingrid and Adenmaha respectively. Rasgrid and Gandur only managed to say ‘let’s hel-’ and looked at Adenmaha. No, everyone was looking at her.

“I’m the only bad one here. Let’s go. Let’s help them.”

Adenmaha snorted while flushing and then Nidhogg embraced Adenmaha.

“Adenmaha is nice. You are not bad at all.”

Everyone burst out laughing. Patroclus was bewildered as everyone in the group decided to help the shrine.

“We can’t be certain yet on what side Apollo-nim is.”

“If he was an enemy, he wouldn’t be under attack like that.”

There was the possibility for it to just be a conjecture but it was quite a logical reason. Bracky smirked at Tae Ho’s words.

“Let’s go save them for now.”

It wasn’t Valhalla style to think deeply about something.

Bracky was planning to charge towards the shrine immediately while thinking of something that others would rebuke him greatly if they knew about it. Gandur spoke quickly at that time.

“I will execute my stealth blessing so gather next to me and Siri. We will approach the as stealthily and swiftly as possible.”

Ingrid, Rolo and Rasgrid stood next to Gandur and Tae Ho,

Bracky, Adenmaha and Nidhogg stood next to Siri.

“Adenmaha, I will leave Nidhogg to you.”

“Don’t worry.”

Adenmaha answered at Tae Ho’s words and placed her fist on her chest. Everyone excluding Patroclus acted the same way.

This place wasn’t Asgard but they were still warriors of Valhalla.

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

“For Asgard and the nine realms.”

Everyone followed Tae Ho’s words and they started to run with Tae Ho at the front.

[Centaur]

[Centaur]

Red words were seen with his ‘eyes of the dragon’. They were still quite far away from the village but that was why he was able to see the entire village at a glance. It seemed like there were about forty red words.

‘There’s a strong guy among them.’

It was like Cuchulainn said. Tae Ho concentrated his divine power in his eyes. He glared at the shrine and the centaurs surrounding it with his ‘eyes of the dragon’ that got strengthened.

[Artemis’ battle slaves]

[Atrocious hunter]

[Orion]

The shrine being attacked belonged to Apollo.

If the ones attacking it were Artemis’ underlings, did it mean that Artemis had turned into a being wanting to destroy the world? And Apollo was someone that wanted to maintain the world?

The distance closed some more. Screams and yells entered their

ears.

And it was at that moment.

Patroclus extended his arms and made the group stop. There was surprise and happiness in his face.

“It’s a quest.”

He said briefly and quickly. At the same time, Tae Ho and everyone else felt an unfamiliar strength. They heard someone’s voice in their heads.

[Rescue my shrine, my maidens.]

[Defeat that evil Orion.]

[Then, I will bless you by my name of Apollo, the God of light, and give you a suitable reward.]

[Anyone is good. Fulfill my wish!]

It was weak and small but it was certainly a divine power.

The owner of the voice was certainly Apollo.

A quest.

The special power that made the warriors of Olympus grow.

The grace of the Gods that are given to the ones that fulfill the quest and the blessing of the world.

Tae Ho sensed it and at the same time thought of several things.

Apollo was in a really weakened state but he was someone wanting to maintain the world. He hadn’t turned into someone wanting to destroy it.

The quest could also influence Tae Ho. It wasn’t something unique to the warriors of Olympus.

He would finish the quest and obtain strength.

He would obtain Erin’s and Olympus’ strength on top of Asgard’s.

Tae Ho clenched his fists. He answered Apollo's consciousness and accepted his quest.

Apollo's blessing fell over Tae Ho and the group. They took off their stealth blessing when they arrived at the village and started to charge.

Tae Ho was the one at the forefront. He moved like lightning and approached the centaurs, that were massacring the villagers, and cut off the head of one of them. Followed by that, an arrow fired by Siri pierced the chests of two centaurs and Bracky's hammer crushed the head of another one.

It all happened in an instant. Tae Ho looked back at Bracky and Siri. They shared their thoughts just with that and scattered. Tae Ho headed towards the shrine in a straight line. Siri followed his back and kept firing arrows and Bracky started to advance slowly from the entrance with the Valkyries that arrived one beat later.

Tae Ho brought up Idun's divine power as a warrior of Idun.

He softly covered the divine power containing in Apollo's blessing instead of pushing it away.

Divine powers of two different Gods.

That wasn't all.

Tae Ho could feel another divine power deep in his soul.

It was still small and weak.

But it was certainly there.

Tae Ho increased his speed and charged towards the red words that got clearer the closer he got to the shrine.

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Episode 49/Chapter 4: The Goddess of warfare Athena (4)

The shrine of Olympus had an appearance that was strikingly similar to the relics of Greece.

There were pillars made of white rock on top of the white tiled rock floor and a white rock roof on top of that. They were made facing each other so when you looked at it from the front you could look a triangle.

Patroclus had said that it was a small shrine but it was quite big for Tae Ho. It looked like a side of the shrine was more than 30 meters long.

The inside of the village was complete chaos. There was plundering, arson, murdering and kidnapping happening all over the village.

Tae Ho slashed all the ones he faced while heading to the shrine but he never stopped. Rescuing the villagers was one thing but he had to prioritize defeating Orion who was inside the shrine.

‘They are guys with no internal regulation. They will flee as soon as someone defeats their leader. That will rather lessen the damages.’

Cuchulainn’s words were as right as always.

Not only that but he couldn’t ignore Orion gathering the centaurs that were plundering the village.

The shrine was placed on a cliff in the center of the village so you could see it easily wherever you were at. Tae Ho stopped his feet for a really brief moment while Siri fired her arrows and looked at the shrine.

Just like Tae Ho felt Orion’s aura, Orion’s red words appeared at the entrance of the shrine as if he had also sensed the auras of the

group.

[Artemis' battle slave]

[Poseidon's son]

[Atrocious hunter]

[Has the blood of a God]

[Orion]

Some more words were added.

Has the blood of a God. Son of a God.

Poseidon was the God of the sea and the brother of the king of Gods Zeus. He was a strong God even among the 12 Olympians.

Did he also turn to become someone wanting to destroy the world?

He couldn't judge it yet. It was because Orion was certainly Poseidon's son but he couldn't know if this attack was Poseidon's will or not.

'The Gods of Olympus are famous for having a lot of children. Zeus and Poseidon especially, it's hard to count all of their children.'

Cuchulainn said quickly. Odin also had a lot of children but he couldn't be compared to the Gods of Olympus.

They had too many children that they couldn't give attention to each and everyone of them. No, they didn't pay attention to them.

Except for special cases like Heracles who was praised as the strongest hero of Olympus.

Tae Ho started to run towards the shrine once again. Right at that moment Orion came out of the shrine and looked at Tae Ho.

Orion, who had the blood of a titan flowing in him, was a giant that was as big as Bracky. But compared to Bracky that was only tall and big, Orion had a well sculpted body. His face was so

handsome that it seemed like it generated light.

The most handsome hunter.

It was one of Orion's several nicknames.

But whatever his looks were like Orion was an atrocious being that devoted himself to raping and murdering. He discovered Tae Ho and then let go of the hair of a maiden he was holding and nocked his bow immediately.

Orin's bow skills could be said to be one of the best among the several heroes of Olympus. It's power and precision couldn't allow his opponents to flee.

Tae Ho looked at the arrows pouring down at him. There were three of them and each of them was drawing a different trajectory with time differences so it was impossible to dodge it with normal methods.

That's why Tae Ho didn't dodge them. In the first place, he didn't even think of blocking them.

Because there was no need to do so.

The best hunter that wouldn't fall behind to Orion was behind Tae Ho!

[Saga: The wolf Goddess]

[Saga: The arrows of the witch never misses its target]

Three arrows flew from behind Tae Ho. They clashed against the three arrows of Orion and exploded.

Orion opened his eyes wide in surprise. Tae Ho charged over the explosion generated by the clash of divine power.

He was fast. That's why Orion pulled up the maiden that was crumpled down instead of nocking his bow once again. He slashed the neck of the maiden with the sharp golden tip of the arrow and threw her towards Tae Ho.

The maiden hadn't died yet.

She couldn't yell because her neck got cut but she was still alive.

What will you do?

Won't you heal her? Will you leave her behind to die and attack me?

Orion smiled. He tried to create some distance as if he knew how Tae Ho would react.

“Adenmaha!”

Tae Ho yelled and at the same time his saga got activated. ‘The warrior that had a Goddess meet him’ called Adenmaha and she received the maiden that was falling.

Orion fired more arrows after having created some distance. The arrows weren't headed towards Tae Ho but to Adenmaha and the maiden. Tae Ho had jumped over the maiden while believing in Adenmaha and then gritted his teeth and controlled his position. He executed the wind slash of Scathach's style techniques and pushed away the arrows.

Orion laughed once again. He, once he had dropped his stance and created some more distance as soon as he fired the arrows, nocked a special arrow. He gathered his divine power to deal a strong blow.

Adenmaha hurriedly used her mystical powers to heal the maiden and glared at the front. She transmitted her thoughts to Tae Ho.

‘Jump when I give you the signal!’

Her thoughts were transmitted with mystical powers so the meaning was transferred even before she uttered a word. Tae Ho didn't become doubtful at Adenmaha's sudden demand.

‘Jump!’

Tae Ho leaped. Orion tried to let go of the pulled bowstring.

And right at that moment.

Nidhogg, who was sitting next to Rolo, rolled in front. She didn't have her 100 meter armor body so the roll of a frail woman was really powerless. No, it had to have been powerless.

But that wasn't the case.

Because it wasn't a simple roll.

It was an action to activate her saga!

[Saga: Rolling disaster]

A huge shake of the earth was generated with Nidhogg as the center and the entire village was shaken over.

There was no way to dodge this as the entire ground was shaking. Orion's stance, right about to let go of his bowstring, was broken.

The only one that wasn't influenced by the saga was Tae Ho who had surged to the air.

[Saga: The charge of the warrior is like a storm]

Tae Ho kicked the air. Orion tried to enter a firing stance hurriedly but it was impossible. His concentration broke because of the earthquake and the divine power he had accumulated had also scattered.

Orion made a fast judgement. He cursed out and swung his bow. It was a strong and fast attack that wasn't poor at all.

But it was too simple. Tae Ho grasped his attack perfectly even without having to use 'the eyes of the dragon'.

Tae Ho moved below the trajectory drawn by the bow. He closed the distance with Orion in an instant and swung his sword.

Blood surged out.

Orion's skill didn't have the capability to block Arondight's blade that was filled with divine power. Orion screamed and twisted his body and Tae Ho swung his sword in consecution.

Orion's arm holding the bow got cut off cleanly and surged to the air. Orion screamed once again and Tae Ho kicked Orion's leg and made him fall. He stabbed Arondight in his left shoulder.

“Growl!”

A huge hunting dog appeared in the shrine and charged towards Tae Ho. It was the hunting dog that had accompanied Orion all his life and could be called his best friend.

Tae Ho didn't even turn to look at it. He looked down at Orion and activated 'The warrior that had a Goddess meet him' and the fake Heda and Scathach that were summoned stopped the dog's attack.

The hunting dog was so huge it seemed like it could gulp down a person whole but it couldn't defeat Heda who had a completion rate that made her close to the real deal and Scathach who had the best abilities among the fake Valkyries. It just got trampled on the ground and whined.

Orion tried to stand up however he could but it was impossible. Arondight pierced his shoulder and stabbed the ground so it didn't even move.

“Agh!”

Orion screamed once again when he was about to curse. It was because Tae Ho took out more weapons to pierce Orion's other shoulder and also his chest and thighs.

Tae Ho was planning on letting Orion alive and interrogate him. If Cuchulainn's help was added on top of Bragi's rune, he would be able to obtain quite a lot of information.

But it was right at that moment.

Orion twisted his body and started to release a strong divine power. It wasn't his own divine power as a son of Poseidon.

The Goddess of hunt and the moon Artemis.

It belonged to her.

“Who are you! Why is it that you are obstructing me!”

The voice clearly belonged to Orion but it was different. The owner of the voice that transmitted directly to Tae Ho’s head and also shook the sky was clearly Artemis.

Orion trembled. It seemed like he would rise himself at any moment.

“You are not a hero of Olympus! Valhalla! Why does a bastard of Valhalla oppose me! Whose warrior are you!”

Orion’s eyes started to get bloodshot but then started to release white light. It seemed like a similar resemblance would occur like when the strength and will of the real Achilles was held on the fake Achilles.

That’s why Tae Ho made a decision. He pulled Caliburn from the air and said.

“The warrior of the most beautiful Goddess.”

“Freya?”

That was Orion’s last words. Caliburn cleanly cut off his head. The divine power of Artemis that was surging up like it would explode at any moment dissipated like a lie.

‘Are you hiding your identity?’

‘That wasn’t my intention.’

Because the most beautiful Goddess for Tae Ho wasn’t Freya.

Tae Ho answered Cuchulainn briefly and spread his palm. It was because surprisingly, runes started to surge up from Orion.

‘The rune system changes the divine power and magic power of the foe you defeated and changes it into a rune so that you can absorb it. The efficiency would be worse than defeating an enemy in Asgard but you will still be able to obtain runes.’

Thinking about it, he had also acquired runes from the fomoires, that were beings of Erin. There was no reason he wouldn't be able to obtain runes from the beings of Olympus.

Tae Ho absorbed the runes and looked at Adenmaha. She had placed down the maiden and nodded towards Tae Ho with an exhausted face. It meant that she had somehow managed to save the maiden.

Tae Ho was relieved and looked somewhere else. The bow that Orion used was rolling in the ground with his hand that got cut off still attached to it.

‘How thorough.’

“Looting is a basic thing in hunting.”

In addition, Tae Ho's principle was that he would first retrieve even the japtem (like useless equipment and items) and then see.

But compared to what he said, his feet didn't move to the place the bow was at. He rather stood in place and looked at the sky.

[You have finished the quest from Apollo.]

[Your talent on poetry and music has grown.]

[Your hidden talent in playing instruments has awoken.]

[Your reputation has gotten higher.]

[It seems like Apollo will give you a reward.]

[Apollo is satisfied with you.]

[Apollo's mood has become good.]

[Apollo proposes you become his hero.]

Voices were heard in his head in consecution.

It was quite bewildering but Tae Ho was already accustomed to voices ringing in his head thanks to Cuchulainn. He expressed his thought clearly instead of becoming bewildered.

“I’m a warrior of Idun.”

He had no thoughts of becoming a warrior of another God.

[Apollo expresses displeasure at your decision.]

[Apollo wants to punish you for your arrogance.]

[Apollo exhibits his rational power.]

[He understands that you are already a hero of another God.]

[He has also understood that you have an independent divine power.]

[Apollo takes back his displeasure.]

[Apollo expresses good will to you, a God of Asgard.]

‘He plays well alone.’

He gets angry alone, calms down then acts friendly.

The voice talked back with an absent minded voice as if it had heard Cuchulainn.

Cuchulainn agreed with Cuchulainn as he always did.

‘It looks like a roguelike game.’

Olympus was a world that was similar to Asgard yet different. The relationship between Gods and humans was also different from Asgard and Erin.

The voices of the Gods.

The humans of Olympus would rely on the Gods when making an important decision more so than the humans of Asgard or Erin.

And that was an obvious thing. That was because the humans in Olympus could hear the voices of the Gods.

‘So this is a quest.’

It wasn’t related to battles but he had still acquired a new power. In addition, there was a probability that his talent in music and poetry would increase Bragi’s runes and synergism.

‘Let’s test it on Adenmaha later.’

If Cuchulainn had heard it he would have said that it would be pointless as the result of the experiment was already decided but fortunately he hadn’t heard him.

There were still many things he had to investigate about the quest. Just like if the others also obtained the effects of the quest or if there was another quest beyond what he understood now.

And must of all, a conversation with Apollo was urgent.

Tae Ho wanted a direct conversation instead of an indirect one.

“Orion has died!”

Tae Ho raised the head of Orion and yelled. The centaurs, that were already getting pushed back by Bracky’s group, didn’t even turn to look back and started to flee. In the first place, it didn’t seem like they even wanted to check Orion’s death properly.

“Master.”

Adenmaha stood up while holding the maiden. Tae Ho read the green words above her head.

[Apollo’s maiden]

[Sybilla]

Tae Ho approached her.

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